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ALL AROUND

The SECRETS
of the
DIAMOND
ISLAND.

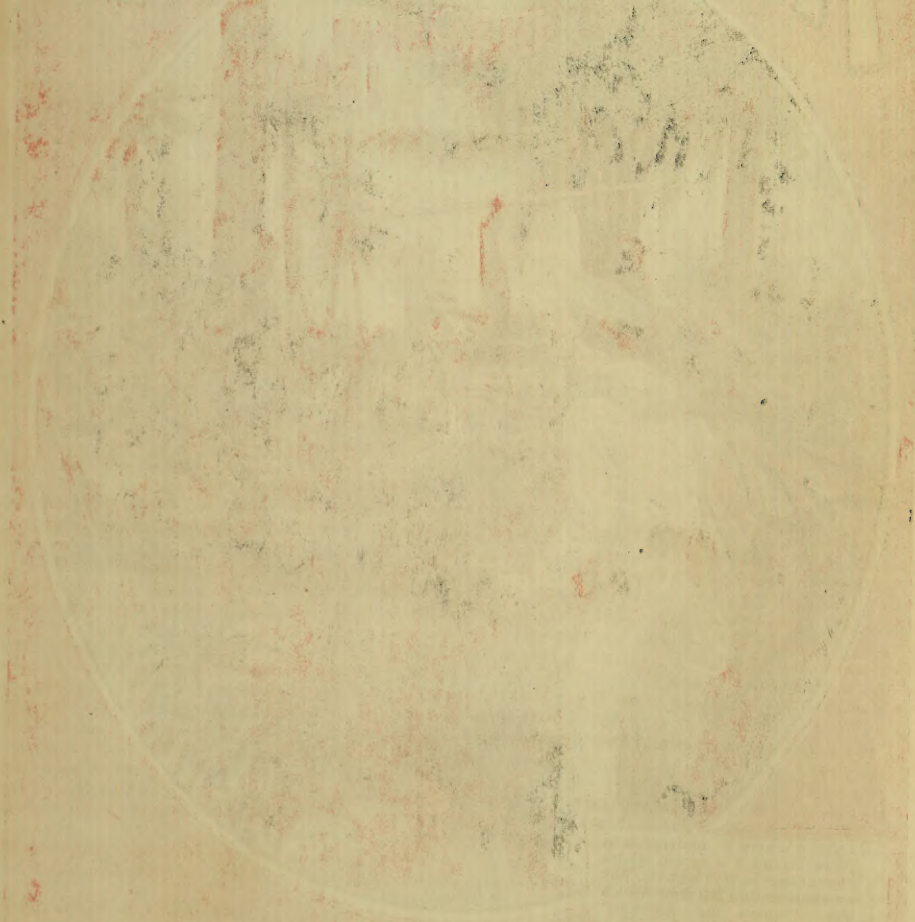


From a clump of undergrowth there bounded a person whose appearance caused a panic. But an exclamation fell from Aida's lips: "Zamora the Amazon!"

WEEKLY.

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ALL AROUND WEEKLY

CONTAINING STORIES OF ALL KINDS

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The Secrets of the Diamond Island

By FRANK R. TURNER

CHAPTER I.

OFF TO AUSTRALIA.

"So you really want to go to sea, do you?" queried bluff old Josiah Hannibal, captain of the *Nautilus*, of New Bedford, as trim and stanch as ever rode the ocean wave, as he patted his youthful nephew, Master Arthur Handley, upon the head, while his fat sides shook with laughter, and his merry blue eyes twinkled with fun.

"You really would like to become a sailor like your uncle? Well, I am not so sure but you would make a good seaman after you had got used to it. But I think, my little man, you had better wait a year or two. Say until you had finished your school duties, and got a little more growth, then you could go with Uncle Hannibal, and he would be right glad to have you. What do you think?"

"No," said obstinate Arthur decidedly, "I want to go with you upon this voyage, uncle. I do not want to wait another year."

"Why not?"

"Because, in the first place, next year you will go to some other part of the world, and I wish above all other places to go to Australia. You may not go there again for five years, and I do not wish to wait so long."

"Why do you wish to go to Australia?"

"Oh, because."

"Because why?"

"Because I wish to visit the place."

"Only for curiosity. Well, I think it is just an admirable thing for a young man of your years to learn when he is young to curb his curiosity."

"But uncle, wait," exclaimed Arthur, becoming alarmed

at the sternness of his uncle's voice. "That is not the reason."

"What is it then?"

"I would rather not tell you."

"Then I shall not let you go."

"Will you let me go if I tell you?" queried the youth earnestly, looking up into his uncle's face.

"Pshaw, what a tease!" said the gruff old captain, good-humoredly. "It would not be right to take you from your studies."

"Oh, if that is all the objection you have," cried Arthur, hopefully, "have no fear. I have decided to stay out of school anyway. Mother has thought it best for my health, you know."

Bluff old Captain Josiah looked down upon the slender, almost girlish form, and as he noted the whiteness of skin and the deep lines about the boy's blue eyes, indicative of over-studying, he suddenly bethought himself that, perhaps, after all, it would not be such a bad idea to let him rough it on shipboard one voyage. It might do much towards building up the lad's constitution and courage. He could remember that he was himself, at that age, a pale sickly youth, and remembered well what a beneficial effect the sea had upon him.

Therefore it was in a more yielding voice that he made reply to his young nephew, who was waiting anxiously the decision.

"Well, Arthur, it is just this way: If you are not going to school this year, as you say, and your mother is willing, you may go with me to Australia on board the *Nautilus*."

So overjoyed was our youthful hero that he forthwith turned a couple of somersaults upon the wharf, at the im-

minent risk of rolling off in the water, while merry Captain Josiah looked on and laughed.

"Thank you a thousand times, uncle," cried Arthur, running up to his uncle and embracing him.

"But," interposed the old captain, "what do you want to go to Australia for, Arthur? You know you promised to tell me that."

The lad's countenance at this query at once assumed a grave expression, and he stood for some moments in hesitation, his blue eyes roaming dreamily out over the white caps in the bay.

"Uncle, I once had a dream of father. I thought he was in Australia, and I saw him there. Perhaps if I went there I might find him."

Old Captain Josiah laughed, but it was a short forced laugh, and as he turned away a close watcher might have seen him put one hand up to his eyes and brush from their corners a fast-gathering mist.

Arthur was the thirteen-year-old son of Widow Handley, a sister to Captain Josiah Hannibal, and a very estimable and much beloved lady in the circles where she was known in New Bedford.

When just blossoming into womanhood, at the age of twenty, she had fallen in love with and wed a smart, promising young sea captain, who was the part owner of a trim sailing vessel called the Estelle.

For a number of years Henry Handley and his young wife enjoyed the bliss of married life. Then the young captain, having acquired quite a fortune, assumed the command of a merchantman owned by Boston parties, and sailed away upon a voyage to Melbourne.

From that voyage he never had returned, leaving to mourn his non-return a distraught widow and two infant sons, aged respectively four and seven years.

Nine years had elapsed since Henry Handley had kissed his happy wife good-bye upon the wharf at New Bedford, and during that time no news had ever come home to them from him.

At first the young widow had been almost distracted with grief, but gradually she had settled down into a calm resignation to fate, vaguely hoping that some day would bring him back.

Meanwhile the two boys had grown up, one into a tall handsome youth of sixteen, the pride of his mother's heart, and beloved and respected by all who knew him.

Edgar Handley was a noble youth, but with different tastes from his younger brother Arthur. Edgar was passionately fond of an adventurous life, while Arthur was the opposite, being more devoted to his books.

At first, upon learning of his uncle's intention to take his brother with him upon his present trip to Melbourne, Edgar had demurred and expressed a keen desire to go himself.

But he was too late, the decree was irrevocable, and so a week later, when the Nautilus unfurled her snowy sails and stood out of the harbor, our young hero was on board and waved a fond adieu to his mother from the vessel's rail.

Ah, he little realized then, as he stood watching the re-

ceding shores of his native land, what the future held in store for him, and how many, many weary years were to elapse ere he gazed upon it again.

CHAPTER II.

THE HUT ON THE ISLAND.

Merrily bowled the Nautilus on her way to the Indian Ocean some six months after her departure from New Bedford.

They were now in the Pacific, and it would not be long before they would come across some of the coral islands for which the ocean is noted.

Arthur had stood the trip well, and was upon the present day upon the quarter-deck with his uncle, Captain Josiah, taking a view of the broad expanse of water with the captain's glass to see if he could sight if possible an island.

But the blue sky came down to the water's edge in all directions without a single dot to break the harmony, and at length, wearied with the futile attempt, Arthur put aside the glass and descended from the quarter-deck and approached the main-chains where a number of the crew were engaged in conversation and the occupation of spinning sennit, a species of yarn used by sailors.

This was the first day since leaving home that Arthur had experienced the least symptom of that troublesome feeling known as seasickness.

It was undoubtedly owing to the tiresome monotony of life on shipboard during calm weather, and our little hero, who had never been a victim to such a sensation before, was exceedingly restless and ill-at-ease.

Therefore it was with the hope of finding something interesting in their conversation that he now approached the knot of sturdy Jack tars, who were taking advantage of the old captain's little nap on the quarter-deck, under the cover of an awning, to indulge in story-telling.

Arthur enjoyed much their rude and salty yarns of incredible adventures on the main, and accordingly mingled with them now, and soon became engrossed in a wonderful yarn of life among the cannibals, as related by one of the crew, a short, broad-shouldered tar, by name Jack Sturgis.

It was replete with wild adventure and thrilling details, and all were so enraptured in its rendition by Jack's glib tongue, that they were all unmindful of Captain Josiah's order shouted from the quarter-deck:

"All hands aloft to shorten sail!"

And the gruff captain was obliged to repeat his command, this time in stentorian tones, ere a response was given, and Jack Sturgis was only half through his yarn.

Instantly all became excitement. An order to "shorten sail" had been so far something unusual, and the cause of it had been made manifest to the captain by the look-out, some while before, but whose hail of "land ho!" had not been heard by any in the crew.

But a glance over the weather bow was all that was sufficient, for there, not a mile out on the broad expanse of water, could be descried the rocky shores of an island, and

about on the horizon were others looking like little black dots, so great was the distance.

It seemed that they had unawares run among a veritable archipelago of coral islands, and now it behooved them to keep an eye out for reefs, for this was why Captain Josiah had so peremptorily ordered the crew aloft to take in sail.

The vessel was rounded to in her course, and stood in for the nearest of the cluster of islands, which was quite near, and a few moments later, under a skillful manipulation of the helm, the *Nautilus* was brought to and anchored in a little rocky cove in the shore of the island, safe and sound.

Then Captain Josiah ordered out his gig, for it was his intention to go ashore and give the island an inspection.

Arthur went with him, and after being carried swiftly over the waters of the little bay in the light gig, propelled by the sturdy arms of a couple of sailors, they touched the sands and sprang out.

Captain Josiah gave the shores a critical glance, and perceived that the island was what he had supposed it to be—the work of the little coral insects.

It was covered with a dense growth of vegetation though, extending backward into the interior in the shape of dense forests of palm and mango trees.

It was also populated with animal life, for in the shady branches of the trees monkeys and birds in great numbers could be seen disporting themselves aimlessly.

And once in penetrating a jungle the old captain fancied he saw the brilliant-striped sides of a jaguar, but he was not positive as to this.

A path well beaten, and looking as though made by human feet, was found, which led in the direction of the center of the island, and desirous of learning whether or not the place was inhabited by human beings, Captain Josiah took this path and followed it a distance.

But, after traversing it a mile or more, as the sun was now well down in the sky, he turned about and began to retrace his steps.

Arthur, who was with him, was much disappointed at this, for the memory of his lost father was ever in his mind; and the first sight of the path, which looked as though made by human feet, had given him a strange idea.

Might not this very island be the one upon which his father was wrecked, and, if so, perhaps he might be there alive to-day, or if not alive, some trace of him.

He did not venture to mention this thought to Captain Josiah, for fear he might laugh at it, and this was not a pleasant thing to Arthur.

It had somehow become established in the boy's mind as a firm belief that he would find his father ere returning from his Australian voyage, and he resolved to leave no stone unturned to at least find some trace of him.

Therefore it became a great desire with him to explore the strange island in the vague hope that he might make some discovery of the sort, but Captain Josiah had set his foot in the direction of the ship, and Arthur knew him too well to attempt to dissuade him in his purpose.

One ray of hope was left to our hero. Captain Josiah had mentioned something about taking water ere leaving the island, and if they did this, there would yet be a chance left him to accomplish his desire.

So, hopefully the little fellow trudged along behind his

uncle through the dense jungle, and they had accomplished about half the distance back to the ship when Arthur, suddenly, upon turning his head to the left, caught sight of something which caused him to halt and utter an exclamation.

Captain Josiah also halted, and exclaimed:

"What's the matter?"

"Look!" cried Arthur, pointing with one finger into a little glade among the trees which had escaped their observation in going the other way, and in the center of which stood a rudely-constructed bamboo hut.

The island was, or at some time had been, the abode of human beings!

CHAPTER III.

THE LONELY GRAVE.

So surprised was our hero, Arthur Handley, and his uncle, Captain Hannibal, at sight of the bamboo hut upon the apparently uninhabited coral island, that neither, for some moments, spoke a word, but continued to stand and gaze upon it in speechless astonishment.

Captain Josiah was surprised, for he could not imagine how it could have got there, but little Arthur realized the truth at once.

Some poor sailor or castaway upon the island, possibly by a shipwreck, had constructed it and made it his abode, and a strange thrill shot through the lad's breast as he thought of his lost father.

Could it be that chance, or perhaps a special Providence, had led them to the very isle upon which he had spent his lonely life, so far away from those he knew and loved?

Captain Josiah strode into the little clearing and approached the hut. It was formed of long bamboo poles and was constructed in a skillful and systematic manner which showed that the builder was a man of advanced ideas and not, as the old captain had at first supposed, an islander or native of the clime.

A glance into the interior of the rude abode, which was now overgrown well with wild trailing vines, revealed that it was empty and had probably been untenanted for many years.

The builder and owner had long since departed for an abode, if not upon some part of the globe, probably to a more celestial sphere.

Captain Josiah therefore only gave the place a curious critical glance, then was about to resume the path again, when Arthur exclaimed in a tone of pleading:

"Wait, uncle, a moment, and let's give the place a more careful investigation. Perhaps the party who made this his dwelling has left something behind which can tell us his identity."

"Why, my child, what do we care about that?" was his uncle's somewhat testy reply. "It was probably only some poor shipwrecked sailor who has not been here for many years, and, if not dead, is in some other part of the globe. Come, we shall have just time to get back to the ship before dark."

"You forget," said Arthur reproachfully. "Perhaps this may be the very island upon which poor father was

shipwrecked, and by searching the place we may find something which will satisfy us as to his fate. I can assure you, uncle, it is a matter of great interest to me, and something has told me since my strange dream that he is alive, and that I shall see him before he dies."

"Perhaps so, little one," said rough Captain Josiah. "I didn't think of that. But I don't think that he was ever cast away upon this island. Although it may be so. But come, let us get back to the ship now. To-morrow we will come here and pull the old thing all to pieces. It is getting dark."

Thus assured, Arthur was about to abandon the search for the present, and leave matters for future investigation, and join his uncle on his return to the ship, when, as he turned from the door of the bamboo hut, his eye caught an object at the foot of a palm tree, which caused him to utter an exclamation of surprise and wonderment.

Captain Josiah turned, and his grizzled face also became the picture of surprise. There, at the very foot of the palm, was erected a rude, wooden cross, formed of a portion of a ship's spar, upon the weather-beaten surface of which Arthur found, as he bent over it, an inscription cut into the wood, probably with a knife.

"ESTELLE, NEW BEDFORD.
Disturb not the sleeper."

"It is—it is!" cried our hero, excitedly springing to his feet. "That was the name of the ship. Estelle, New Bedford. It's the same, and this is the very island upon which father was cast and lived his Crusoe life."

Captain Josiah bent over the spar, and read the inscription for himself.

"Yes," he said, slowly and calmly. "This spar undoubtedly was a part of the Estelle, and some of her crew were cast away upon this island. But whether your father was among the number or not is a difficult thing to determine."

"Perhaps not," said hopeful Arthur. "If we look around we may find something else. But"—and the tears welled up in his blue eyes—"perhaps this is my poor father's grave."

"Maybe," assented Captain Hannibal. "And then again it may not. Your father may not have reached land, and may be sleeping to-day beneath the blue waves of the Pacific. And again it may have been he who cut this inscription upon this, and he may have succeeded in escaping from the island. Certain it is that one of the party outlived the other, and that there were two of them, otherwise this grave could not have come here, for a man couldn't well bury himself."

Arthur sank down beside the little green mound, and clasped both his hands.

"Oh, father," he cried, "I shall believe you alive, and search for you until I know that you are really dead."

"There, there," said Captain Josiah, who was much touched by this exhibition of feeling on the part of the lad. "That's enough, Arthur. If your father is alive, Providence will guide you to him some day."

"Yes, uncle, but I believe, I feel—may I almost know that my father is not dead, and that I shall see him before he dies?"

"Heaven grant it be so," said Captain Josiah, reverently. "But come, my lad, it is already growing dark, and the ship is yet a good ways off."

Arthur made no further objection to his uncle's wishes, and they immediately set out upon their return to the ship.

The lad's mind was filled with strange and varied fancies that night, as he tossed restlessly in his bunk on board the Nautilus, as she rolled at her moorings in the little island bay.

And he waited and longed for the morrow, which, though he knew it not now, was to furnish some startling developments, and work a new era in his youthful career.

Along towards morning he fell asleep, thinking of the strange fate which had brought him to the very island upon which his father had been shipwrecked, and, he felt justified in believing, lived his Crusoe life, so many thousand miles from his dear home, where the loved ones had watched and waited for his coming, and watched and waited in vain.

CHAPTER IV.

MANUEL GASTROVEZ.

The crew of the Nautilus were composed partly of American and partly of French and Portuguese sailors.

In his many voyages around the world Captain Hannibal had picked them up in various ports, never caring for nationality, shape, or size, so long as they were able-bodied and had the necessary qualities of good seamen.

Thus it was that seldom if ever was there seen upon the deck of a merchantman such a blending of colors and nationalities as on board the Nautilus.

The greater element, though, were foreigners, and indeed there were really but five American sailors in the crew, without counting the captain and our hero, Arthur Handley. However, they had all (the Portuguese with the rest) proved themselves good sailors, ever willing and ready to work, and therefore, this being all that the jovial Captain Josiah cared for, he did not trouble himself about drawing a line. In his eye, a French seaman was as good as an American, so long as he performed his duties in an efficient manner, and in ordinary cases this would have been right.

But in the present case it proved a most serious oversight, as will be shown in the course of this chapter.

The truth was, though the bluff captain knew it not, trouble had long been brewing among the crew, and the cause of it was quite apparent. There being so many together of different colors, natures, creeds, and ideas, it could hardly be expected that there would not occasionally be a jar.

And a jar among such a crew could not well be a trivial matter. If they dared not fight over it, they allowed their hatred and revengeful feelings free scope, and soon a sort of general feud was engendered among them.

The Portuguese and Spaniards, who formed the majority, and were a wicked set, were allied against the French, and the French, in their turn, against them, and the Americans, having all against them, were, therefore, against all.

Not a wholesome state of affairs among the crew of such a ship as the Nautilus, and had old Captain Josiah been

aware of it, a revolution would have taken place in a marvelously short space of time.

But he was not, and therefore affairs went on in this manner, until one day a circumstance occurred which served to bring matters nearer a crisis.

The Portuguese leader of the crew had for an acknowledged leader and champion, a strapping, great Spaniard, who stood fully six feet three in his stockings, a perfect giant, by name Manuel Gastrovez.

He was an exceedingly ill-tempered chap, surly and revengeful by nature, and never took any pains to control his hatred of the American portion of the crew.

He was hated and feared alike by both the Americans and the French sailors, and was ever an object of ridicule and contempt among his enemies. The Spaniards, though, upheld him because he was of their nationality and a strong-armed champion.

In all minor quarrels, where brute force was predominant, he ever came off victor, being a large-framed, powerful man.

One day, though, he became intensely angry at a French sailor named Andrew Lapierre. It was upon the main deck, near the main hatch, and Lapierre had bluntly accused the giant of a theft. Gastrovez had denied it, whereupon Lapierre had denounced him as a falsifier, and madened at this, the Spaniard had seized a belaying pin and rushed upon his accuser.

With a fearful blow he had felled the object of his wrath, and standing over him with the heavy belaying pin upraised, would probably, in his uncontrollable fit of rage, have beaten Lapierre to death, had it not been for Captain Josiah, who, with a tremendous stride, came down from the quarter-deck, and with his heavy, club-like fist felled the would-be murderer like a log to the deck.

Gastrovez sprang up and rushed furiously upon the captain. But in this he missed his guess, for Captain Hannibal was equally as powerful, and possessed of more science, and, with a couple of cool, well-directed blows, knocked the villain senseless.

Then he ordered him put in irons for two days, and afterwards severely flogged with the cat-o-nine-tails. Manuel Gastrovez took the punishment and went back to his work seemingly as obedient as ever, and a trifle more pliable by nature; but deep down in his black heart there rankled a hatred, an intense longing and resolve for revenge, which would last as long as life itself.

And from that hour he became the sworn foe of Captain Hannibal, and his dark mind was never idle, concocting a villainous plot for vengeance.

This had occurred two weeks previous to the discovery of the coral island, and the affair had nigh escaped the mind of bluff Captain Josiah, but not so Manuel Gastrovez. Although the captain knew it not, there existed a secret conspiracy among the Portuguese sailors, which meant mutiny, and which threatened to break out now at any available moment.

And in case the evil-minded Spaniards gained the mastery, woe to those who fell into their power, for scant the shrift which would be shown them.

As their supply of water was indeed well-nigh exhausted, Captain Hannibal concluded to make a stop at the island long enough to water up, and accordingly the one hun-

dred water-casks which the ship carried were tossed overboard and towed ashore empty.

A sparkling spring of clear water was found, and a number of the crew put to work filling the casks and transferring them back on board the Nautilus.

As it was a task which would require some hours, Captain Josiah, after leaving a few orders with his first mate, an American, by name Jack Hawkins, proceeded to comply with his promise to his nephew, Arthur Handley, made the day before, to visit the bamboo hut.

And as he moved off down the sands with the lad's hand in his there was one in the crew of the ill-fated Nautilus—for ill-fated she was destined to be—who watched his receding figure with a gleam of devilish exultation in his black eyes, and muttered under his breath:

"Now, Senor Americano, comes my turn!"

Arthur Handley, our young hero, and Captain Josiah reached the rude bamboo abode of the lonely castaway in good season, and proceeded at once to give the place a thorough investigation.

But nothing further than the revelation upon the planted spar was discovered as to the nature or history of the castaways, and so, after a fruitless search, the sun having gained the meridian, they set about retracing their steps to the ship.

It still lay in the same spot upon the placid waters of the little island bay, when they at length came out upon the beach, but all of the crew had returned on board, and Captain Josiah, in surprise, noted that a number were in the rigging unfurling the snowy sails.

Surprised, he was about to inquire in stentorian tones the meaning of this, when a soft, suave voice came to him over the waters:

"Ah, Senor Capitan, have you returned? It is well; but, senor, it will be many a day ere your ship will return."

CHAPTER V.

MARONED.

Round swung the yard of the Nautilus after the taunting words of the villain Manuel Gastrovez, and the old captain, as he stood on the shore of the coral island, could hear the working of the windlass as the ship's anchor was hoisted.

Furious with rage, and utterly regardless of the consequences, Captain Josiah rushed into the salt water, brandishing his arms and shouted in a threatening voice:

"Come back, you scoundrel. I command you. Send a boat ashore immediately. Hawkins, do you hear what I say?"

But poor Hawkins, the first mate, if he heard the captain's command, was powerless to execute it, being at that moment in chains in the lower cabin.

The ship was virtually in possession of the mutineers, and as the appalling realization of the fact dawned upon the hot-headed Yankee captain, a fearful wave of despair swept over him.

And it was indeed an appalling realization. Alone upon an uninhabited isle, weaponless, provisionless, and with the

fearful prospect of starvation or death at the jaws of the wild beasts before them, scant wonder was it that both the old captain and our young hero, Arthur Handley, were appalled.

"Do you hear what I say?" again reiterated Captain Josiah. "Send a boat ashore at once, or I will have you all put in irons."

A taunting laugh was the response. Now the mainsail of the Nautilus had been set, and under the skillful manipulation of the helm, she was being worked out of the bay.

Again Captain Josiah repeated his angry command, but as well might he have talked to the wind, it would have had just as much effect; but this time though, the Spanish mutineer deigned to reply to it, and stepping up into the shrouds in full view, cried:

"Ah, senior capitan, I wish you joy of your island home. I wish you mooch prosperity and long life. As for myself, I have ze ship, and will go back to my native land, where I will now be a rich man. Ah, a very rich man, senior, with such a ship as ze Nautilus."

"I'll follow you, you dirty sculpin," yelled Captain Josiah, passionately. "And I'll have you hung at the yard-arm for mutiny."

The Spaniard laughed a very bland and provoking laugh.

"Ah, senior capitan, sot is talk. How you follow me, when you have no ship? Por Dios, you are crazy. No, my Americano friend, you must stay upon ze little island until you die. Some day I will come back and get your bones. Adios, senior."

And with a mocking, sardonic laugh, which grated unpleasantly upon Captain Josiah's hearing, Manuel Gastrovez withdrew from sight.

Beneath her press of canvas the Nautilus had worked out of the little bay, and was now standing out to sea with great speed.

Captain Josiah stood on the sandy beach of the lovely island, with little Arthur's hand in his, watching the receding hull of his favorite vessel, whose deck he had trod in many a storm, and when at anchor in every principal port of the world.

So many voyages had he made in the old Nautilus that he had become exceedingly attached to her, and now at seeing her in the hands of such a fiend as Manuel Gastrovez a great choking lump arose in his throat, and strong man that he was, he almost gave way to tears.

But only for a moment, however, did he give way to emotion, then with a strong exertion of self-will, he recovered himself and watched the receding vessel until the horizon had closed over her, in silence, then turned away.

He was once more strong-minded, stout-armed Captain Josiah Hannibal, whom storm and tempest, danger or reverses of any nature, could never daunt, and it had not required a moment for his practical, almost philosophical, nature, to accept the situation at its best, and resign himself, in a sort of stoical manner, to irrevocable fate.

But, however, as his gaze fell upon Arthur, he could not help a mist before his vision.

The lad was looking up into his face earnestly, with an enquiring glance in his blue eyes.

"Uncle," he said, putting one hand upon the old man's arm, "why don't the ship come back? How long will we have to wait for it?"

"It will never come back, Arthur," said Captain Josiah, in a choking voice. "There is a mutiny among the men."

"Oh, but where have they gone with the ship?"

"That I do not know, Arthur. Probably to their own country, far-away Portugal."

"And will they not come back for us?"

"No."

"And shall we have to remain upon this island?"

"Yes."

"How long, uncle?"

"I do not know, my boy. Perhaps forever. We shall at least have to stay here until some passing ship takes us off. How long before that will happen I cannot tell."

A realization of affairs dawned now upon the lad, and he thought of his father and the strange fate which had cast him away upon the very same isle upon which he believed his father had lived such a lonely life for so many years.

The little mound, at the head of which was planted the spar, might also be his grave.

"But, uncle, what shall we live upon?" queried Arthur. "We have no food and no means of cooking or obtaining any, that I can see."

"Too true," groaned Captain Josiah. "But, Arthur, we must trust in Providence."

Inwardly our hero murmured a devout prayer, and became at once resigned to fate.

"Who went away with the ship, uncle? Why should they do it, and leave you and me here? I thought always that they liked you very much, and should not think they would do such a thing."

"It was the Spaniard, Gastrovez," replied Captain Josiah. "If you remember, two weeks ago I had him flogged for attempting to kill one of the crew. He was of a vindictive nature, and has taken this way to wreak vengeance upon me."

"He was a villain," said Arthur, repulsively. "I never liked his looks."

"Nor I," said Captain Josiah. "And had I supposed he would attempt such a villainous act as this I would have kept him in chains all the time."

"But I should not have thought Mr. Hawkins would have joined him. I always thought him very good and kind."

"Ah! probably Hawkins could not help himself and was put in chains. Gastrovez aroused the men to mutiny in some manner, and those who would not join the cowardly game were probably made prisoners."

Scarcely had his uncle finished speaking when Arthur suddenly uttered an exclamation, and pointed upward to the summit of the black cliff, which frowned forbiddingly over the bay.

"Oh, uncle, what is that?"

The old captain looked in the direction indicated, and also uttered an exclamation of surprise.

CHAPTER VI.

A GHASTLY FIND.

The object which had first caught the gaze of our hero, Arthur Handley, and caused both himself and his uncle to

start back in amazement, was situated upon the very verge of the black cliff, and it was a somewhat singular fact that it should have escaped their notice before.

It was nothing more nor less than a rude wooden cross erected on the cliff's verge, and standing with a clump of palms, with long drooping branches for a background. This was probably why it had not been seen before, being easily mistaken for a palm tree itself.

For several minutes the old captain and our hero gazed upon it in wonderment, mingled with a kind of awe.

"Let us go there," said Arthur, finally. "Let us examine it. Perhaps it may lead to some important discovery.

"But how shall we get there?" deliberated Captain Josiah, measuring the steep, almost perpendicular surface of the cliff with a critical eye. "Ah! I see; here is a sort of narrow winding path up this side. Yes, and it has steps, too. Surely, this island, if not now, has been, the abode of human beings."

And sure enough, in the black basalt of the cliff were cut a series of steps, leading at an angle of the side, part of the path which led to the summit.

Without further hesitation Captain Josiah began the ascent, followed by Arthur. It was not unattended with peril, and when half way up our hero, venturing to look down, became so dizzy that he almost lost command of himself.

It required some while to reach the summit, and once there, the two adventurers found themselves upon a sort of eminence, perpendicular in its descent to the seashore upon one side, but gradually sloping down into a luxuriant valley in the very interior of the island upon the other.

From the cliff a view could be had seaward, of many miles, and Arthur fancied he detected the white sails of the Nautilus upon the distant horizon.

Ah! the deck of the proud vessel was destined never to be trod by the feet of either again.

And ere either of the unfortunate castaways again gazed upon the shores of their native land, it was destined that they should experience many novel and thrilling adventures, and suffer many dangers and privations.

A moment both paused on the cliff's summit to take in the extensive sea view and note the circling swarm of birds which ever hung in mid-air over the little bay below.

Then they turned to the object which had brought them thither, namely, the mysterious cross. The top of it was visible to them over the top of a clump of thorns. Pushing through these, Captain Josiah came out into a little circular clearing in the undergrowth, in the center of which stood a tall spar, across the top of which was nailed a strip of planking.

Captain Josiah's gaze first took in the spar, but a moment later it rested upon something at its foot, which caused him to utter an exclamation of horror and start back.

At the foot of the impromptu cross lay the cause of the old captain's surprise, namely, six ghastly grinning skeletons, in positions which showed that they had not been disturbed, since in the flesh the poor victims of a horrible death had laid themselves down there in that wild spot to die.

Wind and sun and rain had bleached them to a ghostly whiteness, and as they were but slightly displaced, it was safe to assume that somewhat singularly no wild beast of

prey had disturbed them. Though they knew it not then, there was not a flesh-feeding animal upon the isle, so that all their fears in that direction were groundless.

Overcoming his first emotion of horror, Captain Josiah advanced and bent over the silent skeletons. Not a vestige of flesh was left upon any of them, and it was probable by their appearance that they had lain there many years.

As for our hero, when he gazed upon the ghastly sight his heart gave a great leap, and then almost ceased to beat, while a dreadful faintness came over him. What if his father was one of these hideous skeletons?

A terrible sick feeling came over him, and placing both hands to his eyes, he turned away, until he had regained his accustomed fortitude.

Then a sudden exclamation of surprise from Captain Josiah brought him back. The old gentleman had been making a critical examination of the spot and had made some discovery.

In the decayed surface of the spar was engraved, apparently with a keen knife, an inscription.

"Here, Arthur," called the old captain. "Here is some reading matter on here. I will leave it to you to read as I am so near-sighted. What is it?"

Arthur sprang eagerly forward, regardless now of the horrible skeletons, and rested his gaze upon the inscription.

His heart gave a great leap as he proceeded to trace it with his eye, and render it aloud to Uncle Josiah. This was what was inscribed on the spar:

"Sacred to the spot.

"Here at the foot of this spar lies the remnant of the crew of the stanch Estelle, of New Bedford."

Their names:

"Bill Buckram, Dennis McCarty, Ned Rollins, Jim Heery, Caspar Loures, Raphael Roiguetti."

The great lump broke from our hero's throat. His father's name was not there. And now hope assumed a surer foothold than ever in his breast.

"Poor chaps," muttered old Captain Josiah. "They met their fate far from home and loved ones. Perhaps, Arthur, we are doomed to the same fearful end."

"Heaven grant it be not so," was our hero's prayerful response.

"Aye," replied the old captain, fervently. "But my brave lad, have you bethought yourself what our position is, yet? Look, the afternoon sun is already near the horizon, and darkness will soon be here. And we are alone in a strange clime, without food or a roof to shelter us. What shall we do?"

"Hope for the best," said Arthur, cheerfully.

"But that will not get our supper."

"Very true, but it is a convenient thing to have; while casting about as to where our supper is to come from, is it not?"

"Aye, but it troubles me much to see where it is to come from," grumbled Uncle Josiah. "Let us strike into the interior of the island, perhaps we may be enabled to find some species of fruit, which, if not nutritious enough for a permanent diet, will at least furnish a temporary one."

"A good idea," said Arthur, whose ingenious brain had not been idle since the appalling discovery that they were doomed to a Crusoe life upon the island. "But I know a trick worth two of that, uncle mine. Do you see those

birds down below there? What do you call them—gulls? No, they are a species of wild auks or ducks, similar to those which inhabit the frozen regions, and prime good eating, and I move we build a fire and indulge our appetites in some of this choice meat."

"Yes. But how are you going to catch them?" queried the old captain, wonderingly.

"I will show you," said Arthur, leading the way to the flock below.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE ON THE ISLAND.

When he had arrived upon the beach, Arthur walked along the sands a distance, and then paused and looked up over his head.

The auks were sailing in a cloud above, not a hundred feet high, occasionally descending to within forty feet of our hero's head, so near, in fact, as almost to seem within reaching distance.

They had probably nests in the recesses of the cliffs somewhere, or else they were hovering over the boy in quest of food, a thing which Arthur did not trouble himself to ascertain, but set about his scheme for securing one or more of them for a supper.

His mode of securing the game was a very simple one. He wore to support his trousers a pair of very strong elastic suspenders. These were an article which a sailor would despise, but not being a sailor, Arthur possessed a pair which now proved to him a valuable acquisition.

He stripped them off, Captain Josiah watching him meanwhile wonderingly, and with his pocketknife cut from them a couple of strips some eight inches in length. The elastic rubber of which they were composed was very strong, as our hero found by testing them.

Next he cut from a shrub near, a forked branch, and to each end of the two forks he securely tied the ends of the two strips of rubber; then the other end of the strips he affixed by means of tying a small piece of leather cut from his boot-leg, the whole arrangement in fact making one of those rubber slings in common use among the boys of all cities and towns throughout the United States, and which when constructed with powerful rubber will throw a small stone with almost the force of a bullet.

Captain Josiah, though, had never seen one of the articles before and therefore could not understand our hero's movements.

He did though a moment later.

Selecting a small round stone with as polished a surface as possible, he adjusted it in his improvised sling, and watching a favorable moment, with accurate aim sent it whirling up into the swarm of birds.

A wild scream went up from the dense flock, and then one of them was seen to tumble over and come fluttering down upon the sands where it lay without a move.

Captain Josiah advanced without a word and picked up the bird. The fatal stone had dashed out its brains.

"By the ghost of Captain Kidd," he exclaimed. "My boy, I give you credit for being a plaguey sight smarter than I thought you were. Who in the name of Davy Jones

would have thought of killing that bird in that manner? I guess we sha'n't starve as long as you are in the party."

Arthur laughed modestly, rather pleased at the bluff compliments of his uncle, and tried his skill again.

After several ineffectual efforts he brought down another of the birds and then put his weapon away.

"It may come useful again," he said, "as we haven't any gun."

"But now we have the birds how are we going to cook them?" queried Captain Josiah. "For they would be hardly palatable in a raw state."

"True," said Arthur, quietly. "But leave that to me, uncle. In the first place we must have a fire."

"But how will you make a fire? Have you any matches?"

"Not a one."

"Well, what then?"

"I think I know of a way. That is, if there is any flint hereabouts."

At that moment his quick eye had caught sight of a good piece lying in the sand. He seized it, and with the steel back of his pocket-knife struck a column of sparks from it.

"Good for you," cried Captain Josiah, catching the young philosopher's idea, and so, after collecting together a quantity of dry fuel, by means of the flint and steel, the ancient method of making fires, a good genial blaze was started under the shadow of the cliff.

And in the ashes the two fowls were roasted and partaken of voraciously by the two exiles, whose appetites had been whetted tremendously by long abstinence from food.

Water was abundant, a cool, sparkling spring being located near the spot, and the prospect of maintaining life upon the island began to look brighter to the two castaways.

If they could manage to keep up life, until some passing ship should see their signal of distress and come to their rescue, all would yet be well, and hope became strong in the breasts of both.

After partaking of their frugal, yet much appreciated, repast, they cast themselves upon the warm sand about the fire on the lonely island beach, where the wash and murmur of the waves could mingle musically with their dreams, and went fast asleep, and slept until the sun the next morning was high in the sky.

Arthur was the first upon his feet, and after bathing himself in the waters of the spring, announced himself ready for any emergency. A cool invigorating breeze was blowing the waters of the bay into little ripples, and beneath its refreshing influence both felt their spirits rise wonderfully.

"At any rate," laughed Arthur, "we can manage to live on this island, and perhaps make such life quite pleasant."

"Yes," said Captain Josiah. "I once heard a sailor say that the happiest four years of his life were those spent upon an isle similar to this, and when he did not see a human face in all that time. Why, he said the first woman he saw after being rescued was a negro with a nose as flat as a pancake, and lips like big slices of beefsteak, and he fell dead in love with her. Fact, or at least he said it was."

"Oh, no doubt of it," laughed Arthur. "We will take his word for it. Although I believe I should have to be

imprisoned a great while to become a victim to such an hallucination as that."

"I don't know about that," said Captain Josiah, with a dubious shake of his head. "Can't tell what a man's emotions would be."

That day was devoted to an exploration of the island. Beyond the bamboo hut and the spar, which marked the resting place of the ghostly skeletons, no sign was found of any former habitation of the isle.

Our two friends were its only human occupants now, and it had, by appearances, been many years since others had inhabited the isle.

The coast bore all the same appearance, high cliffs frowning black and forbidding over the beach below, while the interior was a circular depression or valley, thickly covered with a dense, almost impenetrable growth of vegetation.

A thick jungle extended over almost the whole northern part of the island, thickly populated with monkeys and birds, while the southern end was low and swampy, being in one place a perfect bog.

They had been upon the island a week, and were becoming well initiated into the art of a Crusoe life, when one day Arthur accidentally burst upon his uncle with the exclamation: "I have an idea!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DUG-OUT.

"An idea!" echoed Uncle Josiah.

"Yes, uncle," replied the boy.

"Well, what is it, my boy?"

"Wait a moment and I will tell you," said Arthur, seating himself upon a rock by his uncle. "In the first place, this is a coral island, is it not?"

"Yes."

"I think I know then just about where we are located. We are not a great ways from Australia?"

"No," assented Uncle Josiah. "Not more than a thousand miles."

Arthur made a wry face.

"Think you we are as far away as that?"

"Yes, and more too."

"Well, we will call it a thousand miles, and I don't see how that can be when we are in that same great archipelago of islands, which cluster around Australia. However, we will suppose it a thousand miles. There are many islands interspersed in the space between here and there?"

"Very true," said Uncle Josiah, wondering much what the boy was trying to get through his mind.

"Well, now we come to my idea. It is this: cannot we eventually reach Australia by traveling from one of these islands to the other, keeping to the same point of the compass?"

"But how can you tell in which direction Australia lies from here?"

"If I remember aright, my school geography——"

"Pshaw!" interrupted Captain Josiah. "What's your

school geography got to do with the navigation of the Pacific Ocean?"

"If you'll wait till I get through I'll tell you," said Arthur, somewhat testily, for his uncle's doubting aspect had somewhat displeased him. "My school geography has maps which, if not quite as correct as your nautical charts, will at least enable one to learn the points of the compass."

"I don't know. I never looked in one."

"Well, I have, so I know about it. According to my geography the coral islands all lie northwest of Australia."

"That is partly correct," said Captain Josiah, who seemed ripe for an argument. "But how do you know that this island lies northwest of Australia?"

"By this," said Arthur, holding up a miniature compass affixed to his watch-chain. "When we bore down for this island, our course was exactly southwest."

"Yes; but that would not have brought us to Australia."

"What, were you not bearing for Australia at the time?"

"I was, but, my little man, we changed our course a point to bear in to the island, did we not?"

Uncle Josiah was right and Arthur was wrong. The old captain threw himself on the sand and laughed merrily.

"So you see, my little philosopher, that you were wrong, don't you?"

"You are right, uncle," said Arthur good-humoredly perceiving his error at once. "And where would I have gone, if I had gone to the northeast?"

"Directly to New Zealand, which you never could have reached, for no islands intervene between here and there. That is, unless you had a ship."

"And where then is Australia?"

"Directly east from here."

"And that was our course when you changed tack for this island?"

"Exactly."

"Where would you have left the island if you had kept straight on?"

"To the south."

"And in order to reach Australia now we must go to the east."

"Precisely. You see now that uncle knows a little something about navigation."

"Yes," acknowledged Arthur. "You were right, and I was wrong. I perceive where my mistake was in taking the course with my compass after we had changed tack for the island."

"But, now this argument is settled, what was the idea you were going to expound?" queried Captain Josiah.

"Oh," exclaimed Arthur, "I don't know as there is enough substance to it to admit of its being put into execution."

"Let's have it, anyway."

"Well, it was this way. We are directly east of Australia——"

"East of the northernmost point, not Melbourne," put in Captain Josiah.

"Yes, and there are many islands between here and there. Well, this was the idea which suggested itself to me. Could we not manage traveling from one isle to another to gradually work nearer Australia, and finally reach there?"

"Whew," exclaimed Uncle Josiah. "How are we going to go? Have you got a balloon?"

"No, but we can make a boat."

"Make a boat?"

"Yes."

"Pray explain."

"That would not be a difficult matter with the aid of fire and sharp stones. How do the natives make their dug-outs?"

"Perhaps you can explain," said Uncle Josiah, "I can't."

"Well, I can," said our hero, in a tone of conviction. "I have studied the whole matter up heretofore, and know just how it can be done."

"Well, perhaps it can," said Captain Josiah incredulously. "Seeing is believing, though."

"Aye, and you shall both see and believe it," said Arthur. "And I tell you before a week we will have a boat. Now is as good a time to go to work as any. Do you see that old log there?"

Arthur pointed to the partly damaged stump of a tree, which had been tossed over the cliff some time in a storm, and lay now upon the sands of the beach.

"Well, the interior of that log is partly decayed, but the outside shell is hard, and will stand water first-rate. With a little burning out and fashioning a serviceable dug-out can be constructed."

Arthur set about the enterprise at once. The log was rolled out upon the sands in a proper position, and a fire built in it. Gradually the interior became charred beneath the influence of the flames, and soon, after a couple of days' steady work, our hero succeeded in fashioning out a passable boat, large enough to carry two comfortably. Where he experienced the most trouble in his enterprise was the fashioning of the bow and stern, but he accomplished this by means of a simple bit of mortise work, fashioned with nothing but his pocket-knife, and then made doubly secure by means of wooden pins driven tightly into the wood.

With the use of rough stones the outside was polished off, and the crevices in the bow and stern were filled with pitch extracted from a species of tree which grew upon the island.

It must be borne in mind that in this enterprise the two castaways had many disadvantages to labor under, having neither the aid of tools nor aught of that nature.

CHAPTER IX.

A DISASTROUS VOYAGE.

Much difficulty was experienced in the finishing of the dugout, as our adventurers had nothing to aid them in the way of tools except our hero's pocket-knife, which, by the way, was an unusually strong one.

However, after a seemingly endless amount of labor, Captain Josiah himself entering into the spirit of the enterprise, the craft was finished and launched and proved quite seaworthy.

Arthur fashioned out a rude paddle, and the adventurers made a successful trip across the little bay in their improvised vessel.

But it would be necessary to have a sail ere they would dare to venture out beyond the line of reefs, and Providence seemed to have here favored them, for this indispensable article came to hand at once.

While getting the water-casks aboard the vessel the crew of the Nautilus, in their haste, under the direction of the villain, Manuel Gastrovez, had forgotten an awning formed of a portion of the spare mainsail, and which they had erected upon four posts to screen them from the rays of the sun.

Our two friends had made of this a shelter, but now it was decided to make it over into a sail for the Enterprise, as the dugout was christened.

Accordingly, a mast was constructed from a bamboo pole, and the sail rigged upon it, ropes and cordage being made from the remainder of the mainsail by cutting it into thin strips, and braiding them together.

Arthur was in high spirits at the success of his idea, and began to contemplate and discuss the wildest and most improbable schemes that ever entered the human brain. Old Captain Josiah laughed heartily at his nephew's soaring ideas, but muttered to himself, aside:

"That boy has got a wonderful head, and will make a terribly smart man if he lives."

It was some while before they ventured to run out over the surf-line, beneath which lay the fatal reefs, in the dugout, for they did not know the exact channel, and were loath to risk their craft which had cost them so much time and labor in the making.

But one day, when the tide was at low ebb, they accomplished the feat, and then, for the first time in two months, set foot from off the island.

Despite its heavy proportions and unwieldy shape, the dugout made quite good headway when brought to the wind, and behaved herself in quite a ship-shape manner.

Arthur was highly elated, and when the Enterprise had been got safely over the reefs, and stood out to sea, he jumped and waved his hat over his head excitedly.

The adventurers made a long cruise the first time they ventured out in the dugout, coasting along the shores of the island, and finally venturing some miles out over the smooth waters of the Pacific, until, upon the horizon, they caught a view of a black spot, another one of the coral isles.

"By-and-by, we will quietly slip over to that island," said Arthur, "and that will be one point nearer our destination. Oh, I tell you, uncle, we shall come out all right yet."

Captain Josiah laughed in his easy, good-humored way. "I hope so," was all he said.

The truth was, Captain Josiah had been thinking deeply of late. He had, suddenly, in one of his thinking moods, bethought him of the course of a line of Melbourne steamers. If they could strike that exact course and live long enough out to sea in the dugout, providing, meanwhile, that no severe storm or gale of wind sent them to the bottom, all would be well, because the chances would be good of being picked up.

He knew that in their present position upon the coral island it was apt to be an indefinite length of time ere such a good fortune happened, for the island was very much out of the course of either steamers or sailing vessels, and none

would be apt to visit the place unless blown there by a storm.

He also knew that Arthur's idea was only partly possible. They could undoubtedly, in time, creep somewhat nearer to the Australian continent; but there was a vast body of water to cross after leaving the coral isles, which it would be madness to attempt in the shallow dugout.

Furthermore, the dugout was not capable of being stored with enough of provisions to last the length of time, even were she fitted to stand the fury of a tempest.

But it would not be a bad idea to keep shifting from one island to another in the archipelago, for by so doing they might by good fortune strike the course of some vessel.

Therefore he encouraged and lent aid to our hero's project, entering into the enterprise with as much spirit and zeal as though he were not a dignified sea-captain of sixty years, but a boy also.

The first move after the *Enterprise* had been thoroughly rigged, tested, and pronounced seaworthy, was to secure provision necessary for the contemplated cruise.

This was effected in a very ingenious manner. Arthur had become an expert shot with his "sling," and had contrived with not only the aid of this, but skillfully-laid snares made of thread from the mainsail, to secure quite a supply of game, enough to last for a week or more. His game were mostly birds, with occasionally a rabbit or wild hare.

To add variety to the feast Captain Josiah had also made some strong fish lines out of threads from the mainsail, and hooks from the links of his watch-chain, and had succeeded in stowing away quite a quantity of choice fish, so that the adventurers were far from being in the way of starvation.

The bottom of the dugout was filled with this supply of eatables, and finally, one afternoon, having first made sure of leaving nothing behind, our friends embarked upon their voyage with high spirits and bright hopes.

But, alas! as the old proverb hath it,

"The best-laid plans of mice and men
Aft gang aglee."

And thus it happened with the castaways. The dugout had heretofore always presented a strong appearance, and had ridden the highest waves quite buoyantly, but there was in her seemingly stanch hull an invisible flaw.

Had the adventurers possessed the means of securely ribbing and thwarting her in a proper manner, there would probably never have been any trouble, but it was probably mainly owing to this defect that trouble befell her.

Before she had got safely over the line of reefs, and the fresh breeze was just beginning to fill out her white sail, she suddenly threw her head spasmodically into the air, and with a long, shuddering moan parted in the middle—split in two like a sliced banana—while our voyagers and their stores were most unceremoniously spilled out into the deep, the stores going directly to the bottom.

With rueful countenances the two castaways clambered up onto the sandy beach, after a hard swim, a few minutes later, and wrung out their wet clothing.

And scarcely had they accomplished this, and had time to comment upon their misfortune, when around a promontory into the little island bay swept a strange, nondescript

craft, in which were seated half a dozen savage-looking beings of barbarous appearance.

Uncle Josiah uttered a horrified exclamation and started back.

CHAPTER X.

TAKEN CAPTIVE.

"My soul," exclaimed Captain Josiah. "We are beset by cannibals."

And such indeed the strange visitors were. Natives of the clime, all of them half naked, and horribly tattooed from head to foot.

Seven were there in the canoe, which was a dugout, something similar to that of our adventurers, but on a much larger and stronger scale. Three of the natives wielded long spoon-bladed paddles, and propelled the dugout very swiftly over the waters of the bay.

They halted in surprise at sight of our two white friends on the beach, and regarded them for a moment in astonishment; then with loud cries began to paddle swiftly towards them.

Captain Josiah and our hero stood for some moments almost dumbfounded with amazement, and undecided what was best for them to do. They had no weapons whatever with which to cope with the foe, who were three to one, and even had they possessed means of self-defense the chances would have been against them.

Out upon the waters of the bay still floated the remains of their wrecked hopes, the *Enterprise*, drifting at the mercy of the winds.

And as the gaze of both turned from it to the greater calamity, the sudden and unlooked for appearance of the crew of blood-thirsty cannibals, scant wonder was it that a wave of fearful despair swept over them.

The wheel of Fortune, who, fickle goddess, had a moment before seemed to smile so sweetly upon their efforts, had experienced a sudden turn, and matters had assumed a new and decidedly dubious phase.

Fierce-looking, ugly-visaged and brawny-limbed, were the barbarians, and armed with bows and arrows, and heavy battle-axes of stone, and all carried over their backs a long hollow reed, which, when Captain Josiah caught sight of them, caused him to turn pale and utter an exclamation of horror.

His first thought, upon recovering himself, had been that of flight, but now the notion fled upon sight of those strange and seemingly insignificant weapons.

"Great Heavens!" he groaned, "we are lost, Arthur. It is no use to try to flee. It will only be certain death."

"Why?" queried our hero, whose impulse had been to at once seek shelter. "Why not, uncle?"

"Because we could only keep away from them for the time being upon this small island, and when they caught us it would be sure death. They have an instrument with them which is more accurate and fatal than the rifle. Do you see that little reed over each man's back?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is the deadly blow-pipe and arrow. It is nothing but a large reed, in which they place a little dart,

but the end of which is poisoned. They are expelled from the tube by means of the breath, and can be thrown a great ways with fearful force, and are in all cases deadly."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Arthur, with a convulsive shudder. "And are we doomed to fall into the hands of such a set of barbarians? Can we not escape in some way?"

"It is useless to attempt it!" groaned Captain Josiah. "They would give us no mercy. It will be a better move for us to preserve a peaceful attitude, and trust in Providence for the rest. Perhaps they will not do us harm, bodily; but it is quite likely that they will make captives of us."

So, preserving a calm demeanor, and with no show of hostility, the two white men waited patiently the coming of the foe.

And they were not long. A few moments later, with powerful strokes at the paddle, the long dugout was sent far up on the sands of the beach, and with guttural cries and brandishing their stone war-clubs, the cannibals sprang out and advanced upon our defenseless friends.

Seven powerful-limbed, swarthy-skinned men they were, with hideously tattooed persons, and great rings of ivory in their noses and ears.

They were not like Africans, as the absence of the flat nose, thick lips and wiry hair would attest, but natives peculiar to the great archipelago of coral islands.

The one who seemed to be the leader of the party was a tall, powerfully-built fellow with great, brawny shoulders and thighs, and keen, black eyes in which, however, there was not a bad gleam.

The others all fell behind him as he approached Captain Josiah, who stood holding the palm of his hand as a token of peace.

The leader of the cannibals halted when a few feet from the old captain, and he and his fellows gave him a curious scrutiny, the while muttering guttural sayings among themselves in an unintelligible tongue.

Finally one of them advanced and punched Arthur playfully upon the arm. Our hero winced with pain, but only smiled, and did not offer to resent it.

A guttural laugh was set up at this, and attention was now diverted from Captain Josiah, while the leader of the crew caught the slight form of the boy up in his arms, and held him high over his head.

Then he was pinched and punched alternately, and hauled around in a not very comfortable manner, until he was ready to drop from exhaustion, while the islanders to satisfy their curiosity examined his skin, his hair, and his clothing, and this latter they seemed disposed to strip from him, but the leader shook his head disapprovingly.

Finally the leader turned his attention from Arthur to Captain Josiah, and addressed him in his guttural language, but the old captain, of course, did not understand, and made signs to that effect.

The cannibal chief, who seemed indeed to be quite intelligible and reasonable, withal, only smiled and shook his head a few times, and pointed over the sea. Captain Josiah thinking he meant to ask in this manner if he came from that direction, nodded his head.

The chief then laughed louder this time, and pointed his index finger to his mouth several times, and then waved his hand over his head. This mystified Captain Josiah, however, and he knew not what answer to make.

Not in the least disconcerted, however, the chief of the natives pointed to the wrecked dugout drifting on the waters of the bay, and then placing both hands upon his thighs, laughed long and loud.

Captain Josiah, catching his meaning, also joined in the merriment, which at once had the effect of establishing a good-natured feeling between them.

Then the natives began to talk loudly and excitedly among themselves. The leader, however, seemed to hold the greater influence, and the result of the conference was that our friends, Captain Josiah and Arthur, were seized not rudely by the shoulders and marched down to and given a seat in the dugout.

Strong arms pushed the craft off from the shore, and a few rapid strokes sent it skimming out lightly over the calm water. The castaways looked back for the last time upon the beautiful coral island.

They were captives, in the power of the cannibals, with an unknown fate before them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TYPHOON.

The native chief sat in the stern of the dugout and gave orders to his subordinates, which the other cannibals evidently were. As to the course to be taken, Captain Josiah saw it was the same which they had meditated taking with the *Enterprise*, which was to the southward, and directly for the other coral island, which the captain also conjectured was their home.

They had ventured across the intervening body of water, as it was a fair day, to make the opposite island a visit, and their expedition had proved a profitable one.

The emotions of the two captives may better be imagined than described.

They were going into a dread captivity, the result of which was uncertain, but possibly torture and death, and if not, a slavery which would be less acceptable.

Not a very pleasant or inviting aspect, and one which filled their breasts with a vague feeling of hopelessness and despair.

A strong breeze moved the calm waters of the Pacific into little ripples, and the sun, which was well down in the clear heavens, glinted its declining rays over them, making them look like waves of crimson and gold.

The strong-armed natives at the paddles bent hastily to their work and made the heavy dugout plow swiftly through the gleaming waters.

Beyond a few guttural exclamations, hardly a word was spoken by any, Captain Josiah and our hero being too full of their own thoughts to make any conversation.

The coral island had now sunk almost out of sight on the horizon, and Arthur, turning in the craft, with varied emotions, gave it a last lingering glance, and then turned his gaze to the one they were approaching.

It was just visible, a black dot upon the horizon, and he was wondering in his mind how long it would take them to reach it at the slow progress they were making, when

the cannibal chief suddenly uttered a cry of alarm and uprose in his seat.

Instantly the others ceased paddling and, turning in their seats, gazed in the direction of his outstretched arm.

And all, Captain Josiah included, gave expression to exclamations of alarm.

Along the far horizon extended a dull glaring yellow streak momentarily increasing in volume and density. It looked to Arthur like the far-off signs of a prairie fire. It was too plain and had too palpable an appearance to be mistaken for a reflection of the declining sun's rays.

The natives and Captain Josiah instantly comprehended its nature. It was the distant warning of the coming of one of those much dreaded typhoons or hurricanes peculiar to those latitudes. Its force and fury were terrible, and seldom it was that even the strongest ships would stand before it.

Small wonder was it then that the movements of the natives now became those of terror and desperation, and after an excited jabbering, they bent vigorously to work at the paddles.

Their purpose was evidently to reach the distant island before the coming of the tempest.

It seemed an almost impossible feat, for the island was yet a great distance away, and the storm traveled with great rapidity; yet with an energy born of desperation, they kept at work.

Nearer drew the island, until its wooded shores could be plainly seen, with the tall palms swaying gently in the first gentle zephyrs of the storm.

And higher into the heavens crept that dull, unearthly, yellow glow, seeming to fill the air with an oppressive radiance. And blacker grew the long line along the very verge of the horizon.

Suddenly there came a quick, sharp whiff of wind over the waves, which smote chillily upon the cheeks of our two adventurers, then a dull boom sounded in the distance, the ocean seemed to tremble, and spontaneously, the natives, with loud cries of despair and alarm, threw up the paddles.

In mortal terror, they huddled down in the bottom of the dugout, their disfigured visages the picture of fearful dread.

The dull roaring became louder, a few short whiffs of wind succeeded, and then a long line of white appeared in the distance, coming with lightning speed over the waves; the typhoon was at hand.

A moment Captain Josiah sat watching the oncoming of the tempest, an expression of terror upon his face. He realized the situation as well as the natives, if he did not show as much fear.

Had he been upon the deck of the Nautilus, he would have dreaded the hurricane, to say nothing of being in a clumsy dugout with little Arthur and seven native islanders.

It was a fearful position. Death seemed inevitable, and it probably would have been the instant sequel had it not been for Captain Josiah, who was a man ever cool and self-possessed in time of danger.

A glance he gave at the cowering natives, then at the approaching tempest, and his mind was quickly made up.

Springing nimbly over them he seized one of the paddles and swerved with a couple of strokes, the clumsy dugout around so that she stood with the wind.

It was the drowning man's straw.

It was not likely that she would run a dozen yards before the tempest ere going over on her beam-ends, but it was a chance, and Captain Josiah was never the one to see any chance slip by in an emergency like the present.

The next moment the tempest came, and like a reed the dugout with its freight of human souls was lifted high up on the first mountain wave, quivered a moment in mid-air, and then went down into a deep valley, the trough of the sea.

With skillful hand, the fierceness of the gale almost taking his breath away, Captain Josiah held the unwieldy craft steady and again she mounted a huge wave.

Then all the concentrated fury of the gale came and the plucky Yankee captain, at his post, striving to the last, lost all sense of hearing and sight. How long the dugout stood the fury of the gale Captain Josiah nor Arthur never knew, for all at once, after it had seemed an interminable period, there came an awful shock, and all were struggling in the water.

With the shock Captain Josiah had reached forward and clutched Arthur, and together they went over in the briny waters. Up—up on a mountain wave, and then the brave captain lost consciousness.

When he came to he found himself lying upon a bed of sand, and a dark form was bending over him. Clearing the mist from his eyes, he looked up and saw a starry firmament above, with the moon riding high in the blue ether.

Then he arose upon his elbow and took in the situation at a glance. Not ten yards from his feet dashed the surf-line, and back of him he could see the black outlines of what was probably the coast of another of the coral islands upon which the strange fate which followed them so persistently thus far had cast them.

The same singular Providence which had befriended them thus far had again interposed in their behalf, and snatched them from out of the jaws of death.

For Captain Josiah recognized the dark form bending solicitously over him as our hero, Arthur Handley, whose life had also been preserved in the same singular manner.

All now became apparent to the old captain. They had been cast upon another coral island, and whether it were nearer to their destination, Australia, or not, was a doubtful question.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DIAMOND ISLE.

Captain Josiah made an effort to scramble to his feet upon return of consciousness, but only succeeded in part, his head commencing to whirl like a top.

He had in some manner received a severe blow upon the head, which for a while made him fearfully dizzy; there seemed to be a great weight crushing upon his brain, and he was obliged to pause until this feeling had to some extent passed away.

This injury proved only a temporary one, though, and soon as his strength returned, passed away, and he was himself again.

Arthur, having escaped without a scratch, stood solicitously over him and assisted him to his feet.

"Are you seriously hurt, uncle?" he queried, as Captain Josiah staggered across the sands and leaned up against the side of a high cliff.

"No, not seriously, Arthur; but how came we here in this manner? Where are we, and where is the dugout and the cannibals?"

"I know not—more than you," said Arthur. "The only thing I can remember of was being carried high up on a big wave, and then both of us, for you had a strong hold on me, went over into these sands, and I made a leap the moment my feet touched ground and got out of the way of the waves, dragging you with me."

"How long have we been here?"

"I guess an hour. You were unconscious a long while and at first I feared you were dead, but I would not give you up, but kept rubbing you until you came to."

"Brave boy!" said Captain Josiah, patting him on the head. "You did nobly. But did not the dugout and the cannibals come ashore?"

"I have not seen them. But it seems just as plausible that they should, as ourselves. They would be strong swimmers, and I should think better able to buffet the waves than either of us."

"True, but if they did not we are just as well off. It was probably their intention to make a meal of us when they got us home. This looks like a special interposition of Providence to save us from their clutches, does it not?"

"Yes; but how much better off are we?" said Arthur, ruefully. "Upon another strange isle, the inhabitants of which we know nothing of, and a good prospect of a lonely captivity, if not starvation itself."

"True," said Captain Josiah. "But," reverently, "we should not give way to vain regrets now. We should rather return thanks to that same Providence which has so fortunately interposed in our behalf."

"True," said our hero, murmuring an inward prayer of thanks to the Great Giver of all good, who had so graciously spared his life.

"Well now," said Captain Josiah, having pretty well recovered from the effects of his fall upon the beach, "let's take a look about, or reconnoiter a little, and see what sort of a place fortune has cast us into this time."

Together they began to follow the long line of beach, high up on which ran the heavy surf.

All about was comparatively light, beneath the radiance of the moon and the starlight, and they had no trouble in discerning their path and the nature of objects about.

They traversed the beach for a distance, and were making their way among a pile of boulders, when a sudden moan of pain, sounding strangely human, smote upon the ears of both.

Surprised, they turned, and the gaze of both encountered the athletic and not unhandsome form of the cannibal chief, wedged immovably between a couple of rocks, where he had been cast by the sea.

When he perceived that the white adventurers, a short while before his captives, saw him, he assumed a beseeching expression of countenance, and made earnest motions to them to release him, moaning piteously the while.

Although the noted chief had been an enemy to them,

and probably would have caused their death had it not been for unlooked-for developments, Captain Josiah had not the heart to leave him to his fate, so he quickly stepped forward, and with the aid of Arthur, managed to move the boulder in such manner that the chief was released.

When he found himself at liberty the native chief cast himself flat upon the sand at the feet of Captain Josiah, and placed both hands over his head, and then seizing one of the captain's feet, also placed them on his head, signifying by this in a logical way his thankfulness to his benefactor, and that he was henceforth his slave.

Then he arose and repeated in his tongue the word "Kaloo," at the same time indicating himself with his finger.

Captain Josiah immediately understood by this that the native chief meant to imply that his name was "Kaloo," and accordingly he was thereafter known by that name.

Kaloo proved to be the only one of the cannibals who came ashore alive, the others having fallen victims to the vengeance of the tempest, and during the following six months that they stayed upon the strange island was a constant attendant upon, and friend to our adventurers.

And his knowledge of the deep woods and jungle, and different means of hunting game without the aid of the rifle, proved of much benefit to our friends.

Indeed, both conceived quite an attachment for him, for he was ever cheerful, pleasant, and a most agreeable companion. Kaloo became very much attached to Arthur, and the two were ever together on the hunt or exploration of the isle.

The native chief had a very novel and expeditious way of procuring game. With his blow-pipe and sharp dart he could without any trouble keep a constant supply on hand.

Fire he produced with a couple of dry sticks by rubbing them briskly together in a much quicker and less troublesome way than with flint and steel.

Indeed, many points, both in the stalking of game and dressing of the same, our hero learned from Kaloo, who was never weary of instructing him.

The island they were upon was much larger than the one they had left, and possessed what that had not, namely, an active volcano in its center. Several eruptions took place while our friends were there, several of them quite severe, making the ground tremble violently.

The three castaways one day climbed to the summit and gazed over into the vast crater, filled with molten lava and fire and smoke, an awe-inspiring spectacle.

From the volcano's summit an extensive view could be had over every portion of the island, which was in the exact shape of a diamond, a similarity which led Arthur to name it the "Diamond Isle," a name by which it thereafter went.

It was discovered also that adjoining the Diamond Isle was another island, separated from it by only a narrow strait, and Captain Josiah resolved to pay the adjoining island a visit some day when opportunity offered.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ISLAND MYSTERY.

Seven months Captain Josiah reckoned they had made a stay upon the Diamond Isle, and during that time they

had subsisted upon such fare as Kaloo could procure with his blow-pipe and darts, and made their abode in a cavern in the cliffs upon the southern shore of the island.

Not once had a white sail been sighted upon the distant horizon, though Arthur had seen a black column of what looked like the smoke of a steamer, but Kaloo had explained it as a volcano, similar to the one upon the Diamond Isle.

Kaloo proved himself a jewel.

Indeed, our friends depended entirely upon his efforts to provide them with food and other necessities of life, his natural ingenuity and knowledge of the jungle and forest being ever a theme of wonder to both Captain Josiah and Arthur.

His blow-pipe was a wonderful weapon. With the force of his breath alone he could expel the dart from the long tube with fearful force, throwing it an almost incredible distance, and every time proving fatal.

They had been upon the island some months, and there had not been much of an exciting nature to break the monotony of such a lonely life, when one day a circumstance occurred which gave all a start, and put both Captain Josiah and Arthur in a curious frame of mind.

One day they had set out under the guidance of Kaloo to visit the northern portion of the island, upon a sort of hunt, and had got well into the jungle, when not a hundred yards from them, there smote upon the still air a sound both strange and unwarranted upon the Diamond Isle.

It was the unmistakable report of a rifle.

For fully three minutes after the report Captain Josiah and Arthur stood as though petrified, looking into each other's eyes, then both broke out into loud shouts and started for the direction of the noise.

They believed it to be friends, that some vessel had at length visited the island, and that the rifle shot had been caused by some of the crew in quest of game.

Hard and fast beat their hearts, and they plunged on madly through the jungle, shouting loudly all the while to attract the attention of the fancied friends, but they were doomed to disappointment.

Not a track nor sign of human being except themselves could they find in the jungle, and though they made the circuit of the island, not a sign of a ship or where any landing had been made could be found.

Yet they could swear as to the genuineness of the rifle shot, and had fancied they heard a human voice afterward.

So astounded were they at the unexplainable occurrence that neither slept that night, but kept lonely vigil upon the beach, fully expecting every moment to see the welcome hull and white sails of a vessel swing into view around the headlands.

But their expectations were not rewarded. A month came and passed and the island remained in the same quiet, lonely state.

Had not the strange report been so near and so plain, Captain Josiah would have thought it only an illusion and owing to a peculiar state of the atmosphere, but it was too unmistakable to cause him to entertain this idea for a moment.

Ah, the truth was, it was but one of the strange mysteries in which the Diamond Isle was thickly shrouded, and of which this was the first revealed to our friends.

Another made itself manifest in six weeks.

Kaloo came rushing into the cavern one night just after dusk, all out of breath and fearfully excited. He rushed up to Captain Josiah, and in broken English (for he had acquired quite a smattering of that language), gesticulating wildly all the while, exclaimed:

"White capen, come, come quick. See mooch, big light."

"What's the matter?" queried Captain Josiah. "What has struck you, Kaloo?"

"Ugh, mooch, come quick. Me see, me see."

So earnest was the native chief in his tones and manner, that Captain Josiah, followed by Arthur, followed him out upon the beach.

Arrived out on the sand Kaloo pointed excitedly down the coast, and then started off on the run, beckoning them to come on.

The old captain, thinking now that there must be something in the native's strange actions, and with the sudden idea striking him that perhaps a ship had at length come to the island, made no further ado but followed the lead of the other.

Kaloo led the way until they suddenly rounded a little headland in the coast and a long stretch of sandy beach lay before them. The native chief paused here and pointed one finger in that direction, where something met the gaze of both Captain Josiah and Arthur which gave them a sudden start.

It was a bright wavering light, and seemingly a torch carried in the hand of some person who was traversing the beach.

It wavered and flickered and swayed to and fro in precisely the same manner. It was a bright burning light and too large in volume to be mistaken for a will-o'-the-wisp or any insect.

Captain Josiah could think of no natural cause for it, either in any phenomena of the atmosphere or the sea. No, it was a torch and some human being was carrying it.

This Captain Josiah believed, and for the purpose of ascertaining whether this was right or not, started rapidly in pursuit of it, followed in the rear by Arthur and Kaloo.

But the light seemed to recede swiftly before them, and then, all of a sudden flashed up brighter than ever and went out, leaving naught but darkness.

The old captain was on the spot a moment later, but though he examined the vicinity closely not a sign could he discover of any human being having been there.

It was a secluded part of the beach, and backward from it extended a series of high cliffs, with huge boulders piled up at their foot.

Upon one of these Captain Josiah seated himself and began to ponder over the strange circumstance. His position was in the dark shadows of the cliffs, and so dark that he could hardly see the rocks about him.

While sitting thus, after having spent some time in useless conjectures, a peculiar sound suddenly fell upon his ear, like the crunching of the sands beneath human feet, and he experienced a strange sensation of some person or animal being near him, then he heard distinctly a low breathing, and the next moment a dark shadowy form brushed past him, so near that he could have reached out his hand and touched it.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOLVING THE MYSTERY.

Was the island haunted?

Captain Josiah asked himself this question a few hours later when he was back again in his own cavern abode, and pondering deeply over the strange mystery he had just encountered.

If not, what meant the mysterious signs, the rifle shot, and the strange sight? Surely, if this were not the work of spirits, the island must in some manner be inhabited by other human beings than themselves.

Long and deep Captain Josiah pondered over the mystery, but his every theory was exploded and each conjecture set at naught.

It occurred to him that often Malay pirates, with which those waters were infested, sometimes made their rendezvous or storing place of their spoils upon some of the coral islands, of which this might be one.

And the origin of the rifle shot and mysterious light might be ascribed to them, but it was certain that no ship, whether pirate or not, had visited the Diamond Isle since they had come upon it; of this Captain Josiah was willing to swear.

No, somebody, some mysterious unknown personage inhabited this island, and the old captain registered a vow to unearth the secrets of the place, if such a thing lay within the power of human being.

But though he searched the island thoroughly, not a sign of any hidden cave or secret abode, which he felt confident existed, could he find, and at length weary and out of patience with his futile efforts, he was about to abandon the project as hopeless, when a sudden idea struck him.

The idea came to him so sudden as almost to take his breath away, and cause him to wonder why he had not thought of it before.

It was, namely, a visit to the adjacent island. Here he believed was an explanation of the mystery. The unknown being made his abode there, undoubtedly, and had only made the Diamond Isle a temporary visit.

The very moment that Captain Josiah became possessed of the idea of a visit to the adjoining island, he resolved to put it into execution.

With him to think was to act, and enlisting both Kaloo and Arthur into his enterprise, the party of three armed and equipped themselves, and started forth. I say armed themselves, for they had become possessed of some rude weapons invented by ingenious Kaloo, namely a boomerang and rude javelin, the latter made of a species of hard wood, and tipped with a sharp piece of flint, the former constructed after the manner of weapons of its kind, and in the use of which both our adventurers had become quite proficient.

The reader probably understands what a boomerang is, therefore I will not weary him with a detailed description of it. Suffice it to say that it is a piece of hard wood made in the shape of an angle, and intended to be thrown over the head at the object for which it is intended, which, if it

does not hit, it will describe an upward curve in the air, and return to the thrower.

This phenomenon can be explained in no other way than to make mention of its peculiar shape, which in its transit through the air probably encounters the resistance of opposite currents of air, which force it back in the direction from which it came.

A fit example of the cunning and ingenuity of man even in his barbarous state.

It was upon a bright, clear morning that our adventurers started forth upon their trip of exploration to the adjoining island, and at length, after a brisk walk around the coast, it being better traveling, and a quicker way of reaching their destination than by cutting through the intricate jungle, they finally arrived upon the shores of the channel which separated the two islands.

Then they discovered that the channel or strait was both wider and deeper than they had imagined, and for aught they knew might be peopled with ferocious sharks, whose deadly jaws would gulp them down ere they had half traversed the intervening stretch of water.

There was no way to cross, except by swimming, and Captain Josiah, having a wholesome dread of the sharks, was loath to be the first to make the attempt.

But Kaloo, who had been standing silently upon the sands and regarding Captain Josiah intently, seemed all at once to divine his thoughts, and with an exclamation of assurance at once leaped into the current, and with a few rapid strokes swam out into the strait like a fish and crossed to the other side without any trouble.

When he had reached the opposite shore, he scrambled up on the sands, and then waving his arms over his head, beckoned the others to follow suit.

Hesitating no longer, Captain Josiah instantly stepped into the water, and taking Arthur by his side, for he feared the boy could not very well battle the waves alone, he swam out into the stream.

But Arthur had not been brought up in New Bedford for naught, and proved himself an able swimmer, and had crossed the stream before his uncle, and was assisted out of the water by Kaloo, who laughed and clapped his hands in great glee.

And now came the proposed exploration of the strange island. Captain Josiah looked back upon the Diamond Isle with its smoking volcano, and then back to the one upon which he was.

Before them, and concealing the interior country from view, was a high black cliff a hundred feet high, and upon whose summit grew tall palms, whose long branches were moving idly in the wind. What was beyond this cliff, Captain Josiah knew not, but intended to discover.

Along the cliff's base for a great distance extended a broad shelving sandy beach, and along this the party of explorers started, Captain Josiah in the lead.

His idea was to skirt along the coast until they had arrived at the terminus of the cliffs, and where the nature of the country would permit easy access to the interior of the island.

He kept a sharp lookout on the way for any signs of human beings, but naught rewarded his efforts until they had arrived at a little sandy cove in the shores of the island.

The cove was in the shape of a half circle, with long pro-

jecting headland, and a long detour was necessary in order to cross it.

When half way across the horseshoe-like strip of beach, Kaloo suddenly uttered an alarmed exclamation, which brought all in the party to a halt.

With his index finger the native chief pointed to the sands just where the little rippling wavelets came up, and behold, all received a sudden start of surprise at sight of the unmistakable impression of a canoe's keel.

There were also bare footprints in the sand, leading up the beach.

The island was the abode of human beings, but whether white or native remained yet to be ascertained.

Following the footprints with his eyes Captain Josiah noted that they led up over the bank and into the forest, where they came into a sort of beaten path, which looked as though it was in the habit of being regularly used.

Without a word, and closely followed by the others, Captain Josiah began to follow the path.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WHITE RESCUER.

Along the forest path the adventurers glided, Captain Josiah in the advance keeping a sharp lookout, for they knew not into what sort of a trap they might run their heads, and it therefore behooved them to exercise caution.

The path, which was a well-trodden one, led through the dense undergrowth in a winding, sinuous way, and finally brought them out upon an eminence, the summit of which was clear, and afforded a view of the whole interior of the island.

Cautiously Captain Josiah stepped out upon the eminence, Kaloo at his elbow, and glanced down into a kind of luxuriant valley, rich in succulent grass, and bordered with a dense jungle.

Quiet and peaceful lay the island valley below him, and Captain Josiah had begun to think it not possessed of anything in the shape of human life, when suddenly a faint breath of smoke, rising from a clump of palms not a quarter of a mile below, attracted his attention.

Instantly he resumed his way along the path and began to descend from the eminence, when Kaloo clutched his elbow.

Captain Josiah turned and saw that the native's eyes were as big as saucers, and his face had a wild, terrified expression.

"Woolomoo people," he ejaculated excitedly, pointing down toward the wreath of smoke. "Be careful, Woolomoo had people. King Hokomo, he kill—eat—so," and Kaloo stuffed his fingers into his mouth comprehensively, intimating by this that the village or abode of human beings they were approaching was that of cannibals, and that the name of their tribe was Woolomoo, and that their king was Hokomo.

Captain Josiah understood and appreciated the caution, but had a desire to see what manner of village the Woolomoo cannibals were, and what their village looked like.

In doing this he no doubt over-stepped the bounds of

discretion, and it would have been better by far had he returned to the Diamond Isle without pausing to inquire further into the nature of the Woolomoos.

But an insatiable curiosity pushed him on, and so, with a due amount of caution, he descended from the eminence, and struck into the belt of jungle which bordered the unseen native town, or at least, the spot where it was supposed to be, and from whence the column of smoke ascended.

As they neared the spot from whence arose the smoke, the distant noises which would arise from a town of the character of the one they were approaching, smote upon the ears of the adventurers, and assured them that their surmise had been correct.

And a few moments later, after a stealthy approach, our friends reached a point in the jungle from whence they could view a dense collection of huts made from bark, and the skins of various animals.

The village of Hokomo, King of the Woolomoos, presented the same appearance as all native villages, and was a novel sight to but one in the party, and that was Arthur.

Captain Josiah had visited native villages without number in former cruises in both Pacific and Indian oceans, and the sight was therefore not strange to him.

The village probably covered an area of ground to the extent of four or five acres, being in some places thickly built and in others more sparsely. Numbers of the native men, women and children, all hideously tattooed, were visible lounging about upon the ground, or engaged in different duties and positions.

Captain Josiah estimated at the rough guess that the population was not far from six or seven hundred souls, though of course nothing like accuracy could be obtained at such a brief view.

He did not pause long to view the town whose inmates were hostile to persons of his color and nationality, and at once announced his intention to return to the Diamond Isle. He had seen the Indian village, and was satisfied now in regard to all that had hitherto been a mystery to him, except one circumstance.

That was the mysterious rifle shot.

That he could not understand, but time might reveal it to him. As it was, their best plan was now to return to the Diamond Isle and live in as quiet a manner as possible, lest their enemies discover them and make the place unpleasant for them.

They were now warned of the existence of foes near them, and had gained one satisfaction in the discovery, namely, hereafter they would know how to act and guard themselves against danger.

For there was no doubt but that if the cannibal monarch, King Hokomo, should learn of their existence upon the Diamond Isle, he would descend upon them and massacre them all.

At present the enemy were not apprised of their existence, and it behooved them to keep their identity unknown until such time as they could escape from their water-bound prison.

It did not require a great length of time to return to the place upon the channel where they had crossed over, and soon they had reached the spot.

Kaloo was, as before, the first one to cross, and Captain Josiah was the next.

When at length the old captain drew himself up, puffing and wheezing, upon the other shore, he looked back and saw Arthur still standing upon the opposite side.

He beckoned impatiently to the lad, who was about to step down into the water, preparatory to obeying his uncle's behest, when a series of wild blood-curdling cries rang out upon the still air, and the next moment from the cover of the cliff sprang a dozen or more of the dreaded foe, the Woolmoo cannibals.

Arthur, with a cry of terror, made a blind dash into the water and essayed to cross the strait, but too late. The dusky-skinned enemy was upon him and he was clutched with an iron grasp and carried back upon the beach a captive.

Captain Josiah gave a groan of despair, and was upon the point of rushing into the water to cross over to his beloved nephew's assistance, when Kaloo seized and held him back.

And then, as though paralyzed, the old captain saw Arthur in the clutches of the cannibals, saw it all, and was powerless to lend a helping hand.

And to add to the terrors of the crisis, the remainder of the natives plunged into the water and started to swim across with the purpose of securing the other two adventurers.

But they had not got a third of the way out into the channel, when suddenly the report of a rifle belched out upon the air, and the foremost cannibal threw up his arms and sank, while the rest in terror scrambled back to shore.

At the same moment around a headland and into plain view shot a strange craft, with a still more strange and nondescript-looking personage seated in it.

And the singular nomad's features were those of a white man.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WHITE PRINCESS.

The sudden appearance of the strange nomad of the Diamond Isle, who had, with one shot from his rifle, put the savages to flight, seemed to infuse a more than ordinary terror into their breasts, and the majority fled precipitately.

Arthur was not suffered to escape, however, but was carried with them into the forest back of the cliffs, where the natives were brought to a halt and marshaled by one of their number, who from his commanding presence, and the fact that he wore a tiger-skin mantle, led our terrified hero to infer that he was the king of the tribe.

For some while the natives hung around the cliffs overhanging the strait, carrying on a sort of warfare with those on the other isle, and occasionally the quick, sharp report of the nomad's rifle bore testimony that he had found a mark upon which to exercise his skill.

A strange thrill had shot through our hero's breast when he had first caught sight of the strange nomad and his Crusoe outfit. He thought at that moment of his father, and experienced a strange sensation in the region of his heart.

A wild vague sort of hope sprang up in his youthful breast, and he longed to be free, that he might determine whether or not his suspicion was right.

But alas, cruel thongs bound his wrists and firm hands were upon his shoulders. It was useless to make any attempt at escape whatever, and more from necessity than aught else our hero settled down into a sort of calm resignation to his fate.

Finally, after a futile attempt to gain the shore of the Diamond Isle and rout out the other adventurers, the natives started out through the wild jungle on their return to their village, though it was evident, by sounds of warfare in the distance, that a force had been left to guard the strait.

When the Woolmoo village was at length reached, our hero was thrust into a bamboo hut constructed after the native fashion, with a conical roof and a narrow door, two by two, and just big enough to crawl into.

A week Arthur was held a close captive thus, and then he was brought before a native tribunal with King Hokomo at the head, and a discussion was held over him, during which he received many punches in the ribs and thighs.

Arthur fully believed that his end was near, for he interpreted the digs he received in the ribs as conjectures as to the amount and quality of his flesh, and our hero being quite fat, was therefore not in a bad condition to make good beefsteak from, and this exceedingly unpleasant surmise gave him not a little anxiety of mind.

But happily for him the native rulers concluded not to roast him at present, and as a consequence he was given over to a portion of the female members of the tribe, who made use of him in carrying water and performing all the menial duties of a slave.

Not a very pleasant occupation, but nevertheless, with all its disagreeable qualities a shade better than being sliced up, and our hero returned thanks for the providential decision.

Before the week in which our hero served in this capacity in the native village had elapsed, during which he had not once heard from his friends, he had a strange experience.

One day while filling his gourd "calashes" (so the natives called them) with water at a spring about a quarter of a mile from the village, he raised his head and found himself confronted by a personage who, not more from her sudden appearance to him than her rare transcendent beauty, gave him a startling impression.

He dropped the water gourds and started back in genuine surprise. Before him stood a female clad in the barbaric costume of the isle, but without a vestige of tattooing upon her fair brown skin, and with a certain natural grace and development in her well-rounded form which was not characteristic of the native women of the Woolmoo tribe.

It at once proclaimed her in the mind of our hero as a personage of a higher order.

She was in truth King Hokomo's daughter Ulola, a princess in the tribe, and entitled to much respect and reverence.

Ulola was very beautiful, not only in person but in manner, and beloved generally by all who knew her. Arthur had never seen her before, and therefore knew not who she was.

He stared at her in a bewildered manner a moment, and

then with instinctive courtesy removed his cap. Ulola smiled and bowed back, and to the unbounded astonishment of our hero, addressed him not in the native tongue, but in pure English.

Surprised, Arthur could not find words to reply to her query.

"White boy, Ulola gives you greeting. Come you from the land of the setting sun, beyond the great waters?"

"I am an American," replied the astounded youth. "I am now a prisoner though in this tribe."

"I know that, white boy. I have seen you before, but you do not know me?"

"No."

"I am Ulola, King Hokomo's daughter. But how came you here upon this island? Were you shipwrecked?"

"No, not exactly. While the captain of our vessel, the *Nautilus*, of New Bedford, and myself, were ashore upon a coral island, the crew turned mutineers, and went off with our ship and left us there. After which we came here, and I was so unfortunate as to fall into the power of the cannibals. Begging your pardon, miss, if you are one of them, that is what I took them to be."

"You were right," replied the white princess, while a dreamy, far-away look came into her lustrous brown eyes. "I am one of them, but it is altogether from necessity, not choice. I am not of this blood."

"You are not?"

"No. I am an American born like yourself. My true name is Aida Thorpe. My father was a sea captain, and hailed from New Bedford. We were cast away like yourself upon this island, and fell into the power of the cannibals. Poor father was killed."

The white princess of the Woolmoo tribe brushed a silent tear from her eyes. Moved at her show of emotion for the loss of her beloved parent, Arthur waited until she recovered herself ere he ventured to speak.

"How long have you been in the Woolmoo tribe?" he queried at length.

"Oh, a great many years!" was the reply. "Indeed, so long that I have almost forgotten my native tongue. You do not know how strange your voice sounded to me."

"Have you never felt a desire to go back to the land of your birth?"

"Ah, yes! And that desire was never stronger than now. Indeed, I have long been waiting this opportunity to gain an interview with you. If we could only manage to escape in some way together, and get over to the other island where your friends are we might get out of the power of King Hokomo."

A strange thrill shot through the breast of our hero at the word escape.

If they tried would kind Providence aid them in the attempt?

CHAPTER XVII.

ZAMORA, THE AMAZON.

"But will not the king of the cannibals pursue us?" queried Arthur, apprehensively. "And if he should catch us, he would not be apt to show us much mercy."

"No," said Ulola, the princess, or in her real character, Aida Thorpe, with a shudder. "He is a fiend. He would kill us both, if he caught us. But he must not catch us."

"You have a strange history," said Arthur, curiously. "You say you came from New Bedford, the same place from whence I came. What was the name of your father's ship?"

"The *Tempest*," replied Aida, seating herself upon the ground beside her new acquaintance with as much unconcern as though she had always known him. Indeed, she was but a child, though she was a princess in the Woolmoo tribe. She was wonderfully well grown for a child of her years, being a year younger than our hero, but like him, though young in years she possessed an old head.

Though this was the first of his acquaintance with her, and he really knew nothing whatever about her, Arthur had received a more than favorable impression of the beautiful princess; indeed he could scarcely keep his gaze from feasting itself upon her charms of face and form, and a strange thrill shot through his whole being when she sat down beside him on the sward.

And somehow at that moment some strange intuition told him that in some mysterious manner their fates were linked together, but he little realized then by what sort of a bond.

"My father's name was Thorpe," said Aida. "And the name of his ship was the *Tempest*. One day he came home, and told me that if I wished to go to sea with him I had his permission, and I having always had a longing that way, jumped at the chance, and kissed my poor, dear mother good-bye, and started—"

"Did your mother live near the old coast turnpike?" suddenly interrupted Arthur, eagerly.

"Yes, the same," assented Aida.

"Then I know your mother," said Arthur. "Her name is Thorpe, they call her widow Thorpe, and she is great friends with my mother, whose name was Handley. I remember now hearing mother tell of how Mrs. Thorpe's husband had gone away to sea and never come back, and that he had his little daughter with him."

"It was the same," said Aida, eagerly. "Then we are really nearer friends than we at first thought."

"Aye, and let the friendship continue," said Arthur, catching her hand and pressing it impulsively. A vivid flush mounted to the temples of the little princess, but she continued in her narrative.

"I did not know then what a fearful voyage that was to be, else I would not have gone nor let my father go either. But of course I could not read the future, and thought it would be only fun to take a real sea voyage, so I went. Well, the result was that when we got into the Pacific Ocean a storm came up one day and our ship sprung a leak and began to sink. We all got off from her safe, however, in her boats, and succeeded in reaching this island, but were immediately made prisoners by the cannibals. All were killed except me, and I was reserved to grow up with the tribe, and become what I am, a princess. My father was taken away before my eyes and I never saw him afterwards. No doubt the entire crew of the *Tempest* were killed. Oh, the fiends! How it makes my blood run cold!"

"How long ago since the *Tempest* was wrecked?" queried Arthur, much interested in the young girl's narrative.

"I do not know exactly, but I should think it was about four years," replied Aida.

"And in that time have no white men visited the island? No ship passed this way?"

"You are the only white person I have seen since I have been here."

"Yours must have been a lonely life."

"Yes, yet I must complain of the treatment I received. All have been very kind to me, and I owe them much."

"And yet you wish to leave them?"

"It is but natural that one should long to go back to their native home."

"True," said Arthur. "But the prospect of ever getting there is not a very good one now."

"Perhaps not," said the princess cheerfully. "I saw a sail upon the horizon only yesterday. There is some ship cruising hereabouts, and if we could signal her, all would be well."

"Did you see a sail?" exclaimed our hero, a sudden hope springing up within his breast. "You are right: if we could signal a ship we would be all right. Heaven grant we may."

"But even if we can steal away quietly now and gain the other island upon which are your companions," said Aida, "we may be able to keep out of the clutches of King Hokomo until aid comes."

"Yes, but when shall we make the strike?"

"Now."

"Now?"

"Yes. We could not have a better opportunity. We are alone, the tribe are off on a hunt. We are now a good distance from the native town, and if we strike right out here through the jungle we can reach the channel. Then we can hide until it gets dark enough to swim across."

"I am with you," was all our hero said, throwing down his water gourds.

And together the two youthful adventurers started out on their effort for liberty, and it is probable they might have succeeded in gaining the Diamond Isle and joining their friends in safety had it not been for an unlooked-for occurrence.

In their route they suddenly stepped out into a clearing and found themselves surrounded by a dozen brawny-limbed natives who had watched and followed them.

Surprised, they were about to give themselves up in despair to their captors when from a clump of undergrowth there suddenly bounded a person whose appearance caused a panic.

But an exclamation fell from Aida's lips:

"Zamora the Amazon!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

BACK TO THE DIAMOND ISLE.

An impressive tableau it was which succeeded the sudden appearance of the native Amazon in the wild forest dell.

The natives all cowered back into the shadow of the

trees, and regarded the female warrior with an expression of mingled terror and awe, while our hero and the Princess Ulola still maintained their position in the center of the clearing.

Upon her sudden appearance the Amazon had advanced partly into the dell and halted, with her tall, yet marvelously well-proportioned form drawn up to its fullest height, a shield thrown before her, and a sharp-pointed javelin uplifted over her shoulder, while her eyes shot forth a fearful gleam, more like that of a maniac than a sane person.

Her appearance had been so sudden as to startle all, and the natives especially, who seemed to hold her in some sort of awe and fear, a circumstance which may be explained by the fact that she was their sworn and most deadly enemy.

Once she had been a king's daughter in the Woolmoo tribe, and was of noble rank, but through the treachery of one of her father's councillors, who excited the tribe to rebellion, he was deposed from the throne, and slaughtered with all his kindred, save the daughter, the Princess Zamora, who managed to escape, and who, driven to frenzy at the fate of her nearest and dearest friends, took weapons of war, and became a fierce, avenging Amazon.

For many years she had been the unceasing enemy of the tribe, having her abode in some secret fastness of the island, waging a relentless warfare, single-handed, against the Woolmoos.

And from the fact that all attempts to kill or capture her had been futile, her name had become a synonym of terror to the natives, and at her approach, unless in a large body, they would always fly precipitately, for the strength and fury of her avenging arm was well known to them.

In form the Amazon was tall and angular, and exceedingly muscular for a female. Her features had a set expression of fury, and bore evidence of a fierce nature, yet there were still to be seen redeeming traits, which testified that she had not always been the avenger she now was.

Our hero regarded her curiously, and not without apprehension, for her voice was very fierce at first; but Aida whispered an explanation of her character in his ear, and his alarm at once vanished.

The truth was, Aida, in the character of Ulola, the Woolmoo princess, had met with the fierce Amazon before, and had made friends with her, as her (Aida's) sympathies were very far from being with King Hokomo, whom she loathed as a monster. Wherefore Zamora only gave our two youthful friends a glance, and turned her attention to her foes, the Woolmoo warriors. But they, despite their numbers, fell before her long javelin and battle-club, and in a few moments the wooded dell was left in her undisputed possession.

Then her warlike demeanor vanished, and she advanced to the side of Aida with manifestations of pleasure. Aida, who was thoroughly conversant with the Woolmoo tongue, conversed pleasantly with her, and explained their position, at which the face of the Amazon brightened up, and she exclaimed in her tongue, pointing in the direction of the Diamond Isle:

"Brave whiteskin warriors have fire-stick. Keep Woolmoo warriors back. Zamora has watched them from the cliffs and will go to their aid. The sun of Hokomo will set ere many moons."

"Yes," said our little heroine. "And, good Zamora, my

cousin and I wish to go to our friends upon the Spirit Isle, where is the strange man of the firestick. He will not hurt Zamora for Ulola knows him well. Will Zamora take us there?"

"Tis said that if a Woolmoo sets foot upon the Spirit Isle he will never be assured of a home in the far land beyond the setting sun."

"Pshaw, that is only a tradition, Zamora, I will warrant that no harm comes to you from that strange white-skin warrior."

"Does Ulola wish to go to the Spirit Isle?"

"Yes, for there are her friends from the far-away land of her birth over the ocean."

"Enough. Zamora will take her there. But the Woolmoo warriors now hold the channel between the islands."

"Can we not reach the island in some other way?"

"Zamora has a canoe at the north end of the island. We can skirt the channel, and cross without danger. Will Ulola go now?"

"Yes," said Aida, with an apprehensive glance about. "The quicker the better. The Woolmoo warriors are apt to return at any moment."

"Let them come," cried the Amazon, fiercely clashing her shield. "If King Hokomo and all his tribe were here I would fight them."

Her bosom swelled, and her form was drawn proudly up, and a fit figure for an artist did she present as she stood there gazing in the direction from which the foe might at any moment be expected, her dark eyes flashing hatred and defiance.

Then she dropped her warlike attitude, and silently motioning two youthful adventurers to follow her, plunged into the undergrowth, and struck out for the northern part of the island.

They were not pursued by the Woolmoo warriors, and after an hour's travel reached the objective point, where they embarked in a canoe, and struck out across the mouth of the channel for the Diamond Isle, which they succeeded in reaching in safety.

The yells of the Woolmoo warriors, as they still waged their warfare with the nomad who possessed the deadly rifle, an object of great wonder and terror to them, could be heard far down the channel.

Our two young friends reached the opposite island safely, and accompanied by Zamora, who had a sort of awed expression upon her face, and trod as though she were walking upon sacred ground, for the strange inhabitant of the Spirit Isle with his fire-stick was as much an object of awe to her as to the other natives, traversed the beach until near the scene of battle, when they sought the cover of the jungle, and suddenly came out into a clearing, where, behind a pile of rocks on the shore, were Captain Josiah, Kaloo, and the strange nomad, exchanging shots with the natives upon the opposite island.

The scene that followed was a joyful one. It was a glad reunion, and after the first happy emotions at meeting each other again were over, explanations followed.

Princess Ulola was introduced to Captain Josiah, Kaloo, and the nomad, who was a tall man, with a long, white beard, and who gave his name as White.

Zamora, the Amazon, was next introduced, though she

was very reticent in her manners, and regarded the nomad White with a kind of instinctive awe.

In the midst of the greeting, Kaloo, who had been upon the lookout, suddenly gave a loud shout of alarm.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BATTLE.

The native warriors, led by their chief, King Hokomo, were making strong efforts to cross the channel to the Diamond Isle and rout their enemies, the pale faces, out of their position.

But this they found an exceedingly dangerous and risky operation, for no sooner would they show themselves upon the beach than the deadly rifle or "fire-stick" of White, the island nomad, would surely pop one of their number over.

In vain they rained showers of poisoned darts into the covert which held our friends. The whites took care not to expose themselves, and conducted the battle solely upon the defensive.

But they were obliged to exercise a great deal of caution, lest the poisoned darts should strike one of their number, when all would be over with him, for the poison was very virulent, and in almost every case certain death.

No despicable array the defenders of the Diamond Isle now made, with the addition of Zamora and our hero, and Captain Josiah, who was the acknowledged leader, hoped with this force to be able to keep the enemy at bay such length of time as would discourage them.

Their success thus far was due alone to the rifle of White, the nomad, who was a wonderful marksman, and never failed at every shot to pop over a cannibal.

The origin and nature of White was a mystery to all in the party except Captain Josiah. To the old captain White had betrayed his identity, and when the others would ask the captain about him, he would only shake his head and laugh, saying:

"I will tell you some time."

And this was all the satisfaction they would get. It was evident that White was a sailor, for he had upon him a few vestiges of a seaman's garb, and it was also evident that he had been cast away upon the Diamond Isle, and dwelt there an unknown length of time.

His dress was after the pattern of Crusoe in his wildest state, and his white beard and hair had grown down long over his chest and shoulders. His features were not bad-looking, and his blue eyes had in them a kind of merry twinkle, which was evidence of good humor.

He made his abode upon the Diamond Isle, and in a secluded spot Arthur felt sure, for he had, with Uncle Josiah, several times given the isle a thorough search and had not been able to find it.

This was certain, for some hours later he disappeared for a while, leaving his rifle with Captain Josiah, and when he returned he carried in his arms three or four other weapons of the same sort which he passed around among others of the party.

But Zamora would not touch the dreaded "fire-stick," and preferred to carry on the battle in true native style,

with the blow-pipe and poisoned darts which, when they struck, were just as deadly as the bullets.

White was an object of much interest to our hero, and he was ever watching him and his movements. There had always seemed to be something familiar about him to Arthur, and he had in his mind a vague impression that he had seen him before, but where he could not remember.

He could not be his father, for he gave a different name, and though our hero took particular care to let him know that his name was Arthur Handley, of New Bedford, the other did not show by look or word that the name or place was familiar to him.

Besides, if he was his father, though he might be ever so much changed, Captain Josiah would have recognized him, or if he had even been one of the Estelle's crew; Arthur was determined to ask him, though, if he had ever seen anything of such a craft in those parts, when opportunity offered.

White had probably been wrecked upon the Diamond Isle many years before, and lived his lonely nomadic life there, vainly waiting and hoping for the coming of friends to rescue him from his captivity.

The rifles and stores of ammunition, of which he seemed to have plenty, he had probably saved from the wreck of his ship, and stored in some secure cavern near.

He had not sought intercourse with the natives that were of a friendly nature from their fear of and aversion to him. And the deadly rifle he had always carried, together with his wild, mysterious character, had gained him a wholesome feeling of awe and fear among them.

And the fact of his making an abode upon the Diamond Isle, and its ever-smoking volcano, had led the Wooloomos to regard the place as the abode of evil spirits.

This was why they called the place the Spirit Isle.

But now that the natives had seen him commingle with the whites, whom they were pursuing, and were assured that he was a flesh-and-blood reality and not an intangible spirit, they in a measure lost their awe and fear of him.

Every device of which their cunning natures were capable was resorted to to draw the foe from their cover, when they would form an easy target for their poisoned darts.

But great caution was exercised by the whites, for they well knew the consequence should they receive even a slight scratch from one of the deadly missiles.

Finally the cannibals abandoned the conflict seemingly, and for a whole day did not show themselves upon the opposite shore.

Captain Josiah began to wax suspicious at this, and fearful that some piece of strategy was being devised was upon the alert, when one of the party, Kaloo himself, unwittingly exposed himself, and very nearly received the benefit of a full shower of darts from the foe opposite, who all the while had been lying in concealment awaiting just that opportunity.

The deadly missiles whistled all about him, some even penetrating his long black hair; but by almost a miracle he escaped a single wound.

This was an extra incentive to caution, which the party of whites took good care to exercise.

All were now provided with rifles, except Aida and Zamora the Amazon, neither of whom could use such a weapon. It did not require Kaloo five minutes to learn,

and he went into ecstasies over his weapon, indeed firing it half the time more for amusement than service.

But the avenger Zamora held her post silent and gloomy, scarcely ever venturing to address any in the party except Aida, who would sometimes steal over to her side and converse pleasantly with her.

The Amazon seemed to have acquired an intense affection for our little heroine, and while listening to her childish talk by the hour, a strange, soft light would at times steal back into her dark eyes, evidence of the woman's nature still beneath the outward mask of hardness.

But when a wild yell from the foe would reach her ear, she would spring to her feet like a lioness, and glare madly at the opposite shore, so thoroughly had the aggressive warlike spirit become imbedded into her nature.

CHAPTER XX.

THE NOMAD'S ADVICE.

Two days passed, and still the contest between the castaways and the Wooloomoo natives continued, and seemed no nearer a crisis than ever.

King Hokomo pushed the attack vigorously, and was ever upon the alert, but gained no advantage, for the whites held out stubbornly, and would not give an inch of ground.

The deadly rifles were the great source of terror to the natives, and though courageous and ever reckless of life, they could not advance upon the scathing fire.

Meanwhile our friends were becoming both weary and tired of the contest, and Captain Josiah, who had led the party, was inclined to offer a treaty with the foe, and broached the matter to the rest.

All were in favor of it except White and Zamora, who both at once opposed it, and announced their determination to leave the party if it was carried into execution.

Indeed, the Amazon had at the first mention of a treaty started to fly precipitately, and would no doubt have left had it not been for Aida, who restrained her by assuring her that it would not be executed.

Zamora's reasons for not wishing to meet with the Wooloomos in the council of peace were very apparent and well grounded. In the first place she well knew that their feelings toward her were not such as would render a truce very binding to some of the tribe who had lost some near and dear relative by her avenging hand, and also knew that none would hesitate to stoop to any act of treachery in her case, when she was such an object of dread and hatred to them.

Again she had not as yet consummated her vow of vengeance, had not as yet repaid to her own satisfaction the debt of blood.

Then she well knew that if her sworn foe, King Hokomo, should get her in his power, or where he could lay his hands upon her, no agreement of peace, however strongly bound, would hinder him in at once putting her where she could do him no further injury.

Therefore when the subject of a treaty was first hinted

at she did not turn to see it put into execution, but was about to leave the party at once.

The nomad White's reason was a different one.

"Why are you opposed to making peace with the natives?" queried Captain Josiah.

"A very good reason," replied White. "Because I do not think they would keep the treaty."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because the Wooloomoos are treacherous by nature. No dependence can be placed in them."

"Will they not keep their word?"

"Bah! you do not know them, captain. I have lived upon this island some five years now, and should know a little something about them. If dependence could be put in their promises, it would be a good idea."

"You would advise against it then?"

"Most certainly."

"And will leave the party if a treaty is made?"

"I do not care to throw my life away."

"You think then that they would, after making an agreement of peace with us, turn upon us and massacre us all?"

"Exactly. I do not merely think this, but I feel positive of it."

"But as a general thing, the native islanders regard their word of honor as very sacred."

"Not so with the Wooloomoos. They would lie and cheat when it is better policy for them to tell the truth."

"You know them?"

"I do know them very well. I have always lived unmolested here upon this island because I had succeeded in arousing a superstitious fear among them. I always maintained a very mysterious attitude, and kept up a hostile demeanor, and by so doing made quite comfortable neighbors out of them. But if I had made myself known to them, and let them into my secrets, I should have been carved into mutton, and my secret abode turned inside out long ere this."

"There is philosophy in your reasoning, Mr. White," said Captain Josiah. "And I shall act upon your advice. We will maintain the battle, by your advice."

"Yes, it is most certainly my advice. If I had thought them agreeable companions I should have made friendly manifestations to them long ago, and would not think now of leaving you as I do. Of course, Captain Hannibal, you are at liberty to exercise your own good judgment. But if you make a treaty with the Wooloomoos, I shall be compelled to leave your ranks."

"But how long will we have to continue the battle? Will they fight forever?"

"No. I do not think they will hold out much longer. When they become satisfied that they cannot rout us out, I think they will give over the attempt, and not trouble us again. I know that they persecuted me for a year, and used every means to find out where I secreted myself, but not succeeding, they gave over the attempt."

"But in case they should gain the island, having such superior numbers, could they not drive us back, and eventually cut us down?"

"Ah, when it comes to that," said the nomad, with a significant twinkle in his eyes, "I will make use of some of the secrets of the Diamond Isle. Let them come on. I will defy them single-handed."

"Secrets!" echoed Captain Josiah. "What do you mean by that? Does the Diamond Isle possess then secrets of which we do not now know?"

"Even so," replied White, "secrets of which you would little dream."

"Explain yourself. I had thought it a mysterious territory when I first landed upon it, and heard the mysterious report of your gun, but always supposed that no other secrets were connected with the place. When I saw you appear in the channel with your canoe I had thought the affair cleared up."

"Ah! there is more yet. In fact, Captain Hannibal, I hold the lives of all upon this island, at this moment, in my hand; and if I were to allow the natives to come over here, I would also possess the power of launching them into eternity. One turn of my hand would accomplish this."

Astounded, Captain Hannibal gazed hard at the nomad, as though in doubt as to his sanity.

"What do you mean?" he at length queried.

"Just this," was the calm reply, "that I am the only living man, I believe, to-day, who holds the secrets of the Diamond Isle."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SECRETS OF THE DIAMOND ISLE.

More than ever mystified, Captain Josiah gazed at the island named.

"I cannot understand you," he said. "You talk in riddles."

"It may seem so to you now," said White. "But I will explain all if you will accompany me a short distance."

"Will it be safe to leave the others?"

"Yes, I guess so, for a short while, anyway. The natives have not recovered yet from their last repulse. Arthur and Kaloo and the Amazon can hold the fort. We need not be gone more than a few moments."

"All right," said Captain Josiah, "lead on. I must confess to a curiosity to know the secrets of the island."

"And you shall know them," said White. "And they may yet prove of great benefit to us."

He led the way along a sort of rude path back of the beach, and screened from view of anyone upon the other side of the channel by a dense growth of vines.

They had traversed fully a quarter of a mile when White suddenly diverged to the right and emerged upon the beach just where a heap of bowlders were piled up from the water's edge.

Among these the nomad threaded his way, closely followed by Captain Josiah, and suddenly paused in front of the mouth of a small cavern, so situated among the rocks that unless one knew the direct route he might blunder for hours about the vicinity and not find it, which may explain the failure of Captain Josiah and Arthur to find it.

Down in the orifice in the rocks, just large enough to admit the body of a man, White descended, and in darkness they continued to descend, the old captain knew not how far, until the nomad suddenly halted and struck a light.

Then from some hidden quarter he produced a torch, whose flaring rays lit up the vicinity bright as day.

In surprise Captain Josiah gazed about him in the glaring light of the torch.

He found himself in a mighty high-roofed cavern, the roof of which he could barely see, and about him on every hand he could see naught beneath the dark arches but huge chests and boxes, piled up in a great heap.

Here were seamen's chests, portions of ship spars and rigging, old sails, a rusty cannon, numerous stands of muskets and rifles, cannon balls, and in short, everything which might proclaim the place once the abode and stronghold of freebooters, as indeed it was.

"Why, what sort of place is this?" queried Captain Josiah. "Is it the abode of Captain Kidd?"

"Well, not exactly," laughed the nomad. "But surely the stronghold and storehouse of a mightier freebooter than Kidd, I believe. I do not know his name, but I should estimate there is certainly two millions dollars worth of booty alone in this cavern."

"Whew!" ejaculated Captain Josiah.

"Even so," continued White; "why, you cannot form the slightest idea until you make an examination of the stuff. There are rich laces and silks over there in those cedar chests which would alone prove a man's fortune in Paris, to say nothing of other booty. And look here."

The nomad stepped forward and flung back the cover of a chest nearest them. At its contents, a dazzling heap of rich jewels and gold coin, Captain Josiah started back in amazement.

"Jerusalem," he exclaimed. "That's more wealth than I ever saw in one heap before in my life."

"Yes," said the nomad, running his fingers down through the glittering heap. "There are diamonds and pearls there worth a prince's fortune. Only look at them."

The treasure was later taken to the other island and was there hidden.

"If we only had them in London," said Captain Josiah, "we could buy a dukedom. So these are the secrets of Diamond Isle, are they?"

"No," exclaimed the nomad with a start. "I had almost forgotten my mission here. These are but a small part of them; follow me."

Seizing the torch he led the way for some distance among the mighty arches, and then suddenly halted.

"Do you observe a change in the temperature?" he queried.

"Aye," replied Captain Josiah. "It is hotter."

"Exactly," said the nomad. "You have caught the idea, and let me tell you that the further you go in that direction the hotter the air will be."

"Can you explain it?"

"I will; you know that the island is really of volcanic origin."

"Yes."

"Well, let me tell you something else. The remainder of this cavern extends over a vast amount of ground, in short under the whole island. The Diamond Isle is but a shell."

"A shell?"

"Yes, that is one secret. I have traversed it every foot, that is, that human being could traverse. Right out yonder is a deep basin, I should think a mile long or more; that basin is a hissing, seething mass of molten lava, con-

tinually tossing and heaving like the sea. It extends about the crater of the volcano, and is fed by it."

Captain Josiah listened in amazement.

"But now we come to the principal secret of all," said the nomad, "and one which I did not discover for a great while. Over yonder about half a mile is a sea wall. What I mean by that is a vast ledge of rock under the water line, and which, if you put your ear to it, you can hear the surf beating overhead."

"Well, if that sea wall should give way," continued White, in measured tones, "the island would be almost instantly destroyed. You see it would be letting the sea in upon the bed of molten lava, in cooling which such a volume of steam would be raised as would blow the island sky high."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LAST OF THE DIAMOND ISLAND.

"Great Heavens," exclaimed Captain Josiah, a cold perspiration breaking out over him. "Then we are at this minute in a death trap."

"Even so," was the nomad's laconic reply. "But the waves of a century might beat upon that wall of rock ere it would give way, did it not receive some ruder shock than the wash of the waves."

"But," continued White, "now comes the great secret of which no one is possessed but myself, and which enables me to hold in my hand the lives of all upon this isle and the safety of the isle itself. With one motion of my hand I could send us all to death."

"How?"

"Simple enough. The pirates who generally made this their stronghold were probably fearful of being discovered and driven to their retreat and therefore prepared a means of retreat, and also of foiling and consigning to a horrible fate their pursuers."

"I do not understand."

"In that wall of rock, which alone separates the sea from the interior of the island, is a secret mine of gun-powder, which, if the match is touched to it, would quickly accomplish the work."

Captain Josiah started back with a cry of horror.

"Now you may understand my meaning," said the nomad, "when I say that if the natives gain the island, I can make use of my secret to send them over the road to destruction in double quick time."

"But how would you escape it yourself?"

"By going over to the other island."

"You have a fuse connected with the mine?"

"Yes, a fuse which will burn twenty minutes, a sufficient length of time."

They found matters assuming a critical aspect, when at length, after emerging from the cavern, they returned to the spot where they had left Kaloo, Arthur and Zamora, the Amazon.

The natives had made a determined attack, and would have gained the isle had it not been for the determined efforts of Kaloo and Zamora, who fought them back bravely.

Brave Kaloo, the trusty, tried and true, had also in some

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manner been so unfortunate as to get a wound from one of the poisoned arrows.

It had struck him upon the shoulder, which was already swelling up into a hideous black wound. The horrible realization dawned upon all that the trusty native had met his death stroke.

But, brave fellow, he met his fate calmly and resignedly. With his eyes turned to the westward, where the declining sun was tinging the clouds with amber and gold, he died in White's arms.

Tenderly White closed the unfortunate native's eyes, and then all turned away, too overcome to speak.

And at that moment the Wooloomoo princess, Aida, came running breathlessly into the clearing, with her face aglow with excitement. She had been absent unnoticed several minutes from the spot.

"The Wooloomos have gained the isle!" she said, breathlessly, "and are creeping up to take us by surprise. They are coming from up the channel."

An exclamation broke from the lips of White, the nomad, and he sprang away into the bushes without a word.

Anxiously all awaited his return. He at length broke in upon them, all out of breath.

"It is true!" he said, excitedly. "Can you all swim? We must cross the channel immediately."

All eyes were turned upon Aida. But the fair maiden had not spent so many years of her life among the Wooloomos and had not learned this common art, and the result was that a few moments later all in the party had in safety gained the opposite side of the channel.

Scarcely had they done so when there smote upon their

ears the dull, rumbling sound of an underground explosion, followed by a fearful trembling of the earth.

The mighty secret powers beneath the Diamond Isle were at work.

Then it was suddenly discovered, as all waited breathlessly the coming developments, that Zamora the Amazon was not in the party, and had not crossed the channel with them.

Unseen she had stolen away into the undergrowth, and suddenly, as our friends stood upon the beach of the Wooloomoo Isle, two human beings came whirling out of the bushes upon the opposite side, and rolled in deadly combat upon the sandy beach.

They were immediately recognized as Zamora, the Amazon, and Hokomo, King of the Wooloomos, her deadly and sworn foe, and whom she was destined after all to wreak her vengeance upon.

Fiercely they fought, rolling and twisting like mad creatures upon the sands, while the work of destruction was going on beneath their very feet, a conflict of mighty powers which threatened to engulf them both ere their feud was ended.

To the northward upon the Diamond Isle, a fearful convulsion seemed to be going on, and Captain Josiah and White, who alone knew the meaning of it, caused all in the party to withdraw to the higher grounds of the cliffs.

For they were fearful a tidal wave might succeed the collapsing of the Diamond Isle. This caution proved a wholesome one some moments later.

So engrossed were our friends in the death struggle between the Amazon and her foe, that they for a while al-

lowed the fearful trembling, swaying motion of the island to go unnoticed, until, just as Zamora's long, gaunt figure was seen to rise victoriously over the prostrate form of her foe, a sudden deafening series of explosions ensued in the very center of the island, and several fierce jets of steam and heated water arose mountains high, filling the air, and making a very seething inferno out of the once beautiful green isle.

The effect of the water upon the vast sea of molten lava beneath the surface of the island was more terrific than White, the nomad, or Captain Josiah had dreamed of.

Piece by piece the beautiful isle succumbed to the fiery flood, until in a short while naught could be seen of it save a dense mass of seething boiling water and steam.

For two days the mighty elements under ground battled fiercely, and then subsided, leaving a calm, smooth expanse of water over what had once been the Diamond Isle.

Nothing was ever seen after of Zamora, the Amazon, and it was believed she met a voluntary or accidental death upon the isle. Not one of the natives who crossed over escaped the fury of the death-trap.

A week passed, and one day Arthur, who had been upon the cliffs, came running up with the intelligence that a sail was in sight.

Excitedly, all started for the bluff, and sure enough, on the horizon, and bearing directly down upon the island, was a snowy sail.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

Nearer drew the unknown craft until she finally, with graceful motion, rounded a bend, and entered a cove in the island, where she hove to, and then those upon the island read upon her stern; Starlight, New Bedford.

A strange thrill shot through the breast of our hero, as he noted that the ship was from the land of his birth, and the very town, in fact, and half-delirious with joy he ran down upon the beach, and began waving his arms excitedly.

His boat came ashore, and the adventurers, White, the nomad, Aida Thorpe, once Ulola, the Woolmoo princess, Captain Josiah, and our hero, were taken aboard.

Almost the first person that Arthur met, upon stepping upon the Starlight's deck, was a little woman clad in sombre black, but in whose graceful form and pleasant matronly features he recognized his own beloved mother.

Happy was that meeting on board the Starlight, and then explanations followed.

News had been conveyed to Mrs. Handley at New Bedford, of the mutiny of the crew of the Nautilus, by one of her crew.

After leaving her captain upon the coral isle, the Nautilus had assumed the character of a pirate, but unfortunately for Manuel Gastrovez, before he had held his position as freebooter two months, he fell unwittingly into the clutches of a war frigate of the United States service and was made a prisoner.

The Nautilus had been taken to Annapolis and there awaited its owner, as sound in timber as the day she started from New Bedford upon that memorable Australian voyage.

Manuel Gastrovez was made a prisoner and met a deserv- ing fate.

When Mrs. Handley learned that her beloved youngest son and Captain Josiah had been left upon a coral island in the Pacific, she did not tarry a moment until she had chartered the Starlight to go in search of them with the survivors of the Nautilus crew as a guide.

Fortune had favored them, and they were once more reunited in this life never again to be separated until death's call.

And now transpired a new and entirely unexpected development.

White, the nomad, who had been standing near the ship's lee-rail, watching intently the meeting of friends and dear relatives, now advanced toward Mrs. Handley, and put forth both hands, saying in a calm voice, but with a visible tremor in its utterance:

"Mary, do you know me?"

A moment Mrs. Handley drew back and regarded the white-haired nomad, then with a long, sobbing cry, she sprang, to the surprise of all, fainting into his arms, saying the one name:

"Henry, my long lost husband."

White, the nomad, was Arthur's long lost father, the sole survivor of the Estelle's crew.

And now this story draws to its end. The treasure of the Diamond Isle was put aboard the ship.

It need scarcely be said that the Starlight returned immediately in safety to New Bedford, where many glad friends welcomed the castaways' return.

The Nautilus was recovered, and Captain Josiah made many a cruise with her in after years, none so memorable, though, as the one we have chronicled.

White, or in his true character, Henry Handley, being now restored to his dear ones, engaged in business in New Bedford, and became in after years a prosperous merchant.

Aida Thorpe went to live with them and finished her education, after which, the liking which she had at first instinctively felt for Arthur Handley, our hero, ripened into true love, and as a consequence, in due time, after Arthur had acquired a proper position in the world, they were united for life in the bonds of matrimony.

Captain Josiah lived to a good old age, following until death his favorite vocation, and after his favorite protege, Arthur, had become a married man, he was wont when at home to recall many times the strange adventures which befell them on that memorable cruise to the Pacific, and the strange secrets of the Diamond Isle.

THE END.

Read "GALLOPING O'HAGAN; OR, THE BOLD FREE RIDER," which will be the next number (11) of "All Around Weekly."

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CHOICE READING MATTER.

Varnished wall paper should never be cleaned by rubbing with a flannel or cloth. Procure a good, soft whitewash brush, which can be bought at any oil store, then have a bucket of clean, soft warm water, in which yellow soap has been lathered. Dip the brush into the water, slightly squeeze it, and commence rubbing gently from the bottom of the paper, working upward. You will thus have paper free from smears and the varnish uninjured.

The magnificent forests of Douglas fir in Washington—it is called Washington fir there and Oregon fir (its commercial name) in Oregon—do not have an equal anywhere else in the world. This is not surprising if we take into account the rainfall, which in the Puget Sound country is about fifty-three inches, while up in the higher Cascades near Seattle it is 100 inches and even reaches 150 inches. Under such climatic conditions the seeds of trees germinate readily and all trees continue to make a vigorous growth. These great forests are due to the climatic conditions of the region. On the east slope of the Cascades the rainfall is much less, and here the bull pine is found, interspersed with beautiful white pines, which sometimes reaches a height of 200 feet and a diameter of 6 feet, although there are many trees over 100 feet high and 3 or 4 feet in diameter. The tree resembles our Eastern white pine, but is more slender, and with slender spreading or somewhat drooping branches.

Under command of Gen. William Crozier, the chief of the ordnance division, whose name is linked with the scientific advancement of that part of the American military system, the ordnance board at the Sandy Hook proving grounds is preparing a program for a series of ordnance and gunnery tests against air craft, that will occupy several weeks. A number of captive balloons will be used for targets. The experiments, of course, will be with the projectiles and the types of guns needed to bring down the enemy from the sky. An elevation of 45 degrees is the highest angle attainable with modern field guns; and this, of course, means that there remains directly overhead a safety arc of 90 degrees, within which airplanes could work untouched by projectiles from the ground. They could enter this area from a great height, safely out of range, then drop down at leisure and shoot at our forces. The impossibility of elevating our present artillery any higher would make it impossible to hit them. When the Americans were investing Santiago in the late Spanish War they made good use of a captive balloon.

One waterway, carried on a bridge across another waterway, is not a particularly uncommon sight, especially in the far West, where irrigation ditches run in every direction, but probably in no place in the world is there a duplicate of the Manchester ship canal, in England, at the point where it is crossed by the Barton aqueduct. The canal, which is itself a remarkable engineering feat, is crossed by the aqueduct which flows over a drawbridge. The aqueduct weighs 14,000 tons and has a watertight gate at either end. When one of the big boats in the ship canal below finds it necessary to pass the aqueduct these gates are dropped and the water is held back while the bridge is swung just as any other bridge would be moved. When the boats have passed the bridge swings back, the gates are raised and the water in the aqueduct flows on its way. The ship canal, which was begun in 1887, gives access to seagoing vessels. It was opened for use January 1, 1894. It starts at Eastham, on the left bank of the Mersey estuary some four miles above Birkenhead. It has a breadth of 172 feet at the surface, and 120 feet at the bottom and is 26 feet deep.

RIB TICKLERS.

"My daughter isn't going to sing any more." "I know it." "How'd you know it?" "There are only twenty-four hours in a day."

"Now, my son-in-law to be, what is the amount of your debts?" "My dear sir, I'm ashamed to mention it." "What! have you so few as that?"

Model—Pardon me, sir, but isn't there another artist in this building? Artist—Well, that is a matter of opinion. There is another fellow who paints.

Teacher—Which letter is the next one to the letter "H"? Boy—Dunno, ma'am. Teacher—What have I on both sides of my nose? Boy—Freckles, ma'am.

"Why don't you state your ideas in simple language that everybody can comprehend?" "My friend," answered the lecturer, "what is the use of inviting argument?"

"It takes a great deal of intelligence to amass a colossal fortune." "Yes," answered Mr. Dustin Stax, "and a lot more to know just what to do with it when you've got it."

Mistress—Jane, that's another wine-glass you've broken! How did it happen? Jane (cheerfully)—Don't know, I'm sure, but I allus wipes them little things off their stalks.

"I fear no foe in shining armor," sang the man at the front row. "Don't you, old chap?" grumbled the bachelor in the front row. "Then you try and open a sardine tin with a pocket-knife."

Hicks—If patience was a virtue, Loeffer is one of the most virtuous men on earth. Wicks—Got lots of patience, eh? Hicks—Yes; he's been sitting around for about ten years waiting for work.

Judge—Have you been arrested before? Prisoner—No, sir. Judge—Have you been in this court before? Prisoner—No, sir. Judge—Are you certain? Prisoner—I am, sir. Judge—Your face looks decidedly familiar. Where have I seen it before? Prisoner—I'm the bartender in the saloon across the way, sir.

A Brave Boy's Adventures

By Paul Braddon.

The time was about a quarter before eight of a mild, cloudy night.

The place was a dark section of sidewalk at the junction of a fashionable cross street and an equally fashionable avenue.

The corner was a small, but handsomely kept inclosure, surrounding a fine city house—the residence of a wealthy merchant named Greer.

At the moment an elegantly dressed youth was sauntering down that strip of pavement next the street side of the inclosure.

He was on the point of turning the corner, apparently with the intention of ascending the steps of the residence, when somebody accosted him.

"Hello! Is it really you, Oliver? When did you get back?"

The elegant youth thus addressed as Oliver, stopped, started forward again as if to ignore the salute, and then turned with evident reluctance toward the boy who had accosted him.

His name was Neil Dare; his parents had died a year and a half previously, leaving no fortune whatever for the boy; and he was at present employed in the delivery department of a mammoth fancy goods emporium.

"What do you want of me?" the youth addressed as Oliver asked rudely.

Neil's honest face flushed slightly at the rude and curiously uneasy air of the other.

"Why, I was glad to see you, of course! You seem to have been doing pretty well for yourself while you were away, Oliver."

Oliver laughed slightly—but it was a strangely forced sound.

"What are you doing around here, Neil?"

"I have a package to deliver to Mr. Greer's daughter."

"I will save you the trouble of going into the house, Neil. I am invited to a little party there to-night. I will take the package to Miss Evylin myself if you like."

"I promised Miss Greer I would deliver it into her own hands."

"So Evylin Greer has the honor of your acquaintance, has she?"

The query burst from Oliver's lips with a sneer, and yet with something like terror.

Neil's handsome, honest face flushed crimson.

Some few weeks before the valiant boy had snatched Mr. Greer's lovely daughter almost from beneath the feet of a frenzied runaway team.

Neil had undoubtedly saved her life; and she had manifested her gratitude by showing a most kindly interest in his welfare.

But Neil was far too manly to boast of the matter.

"I have spoken with her, and of course know her from her being frequently in the store, but I don't suppose she knows my name," he replied.

"So she don't know your name?"

Oliver repeated the words with a sneering laugh and with a curious air of relief.

"I can't see what you are aiming at, Oliver! I can't see why you are so anxious to prevent me doing an ordinary errand," said Neil, beginning to look nettled.

He had scarcely spoken the words before the other suddenly seized the package and jerked it from his hands.

"I wish to be civil to Miss Evylin, and to save you a little trouble—that's all."

And with a low, sneering laugh the elegant youth ran lightly up the steps and hurriedly rang the bell.

"It's lucky that young fox didn't meet me inside the house! His acquaintance with Evylin Greer must be brought to an end somehow and at once! A word would ruin the whole thing! I never had such a fright in my life."

And as Oliver muttered the words to himself, he felt icy sweat-drops oozing from every pore.

A second later he was admitted, and the door closed behind him.

Meanwhile, Neil stood motionless in the gloom of the shadowy sidewalk.

The audacity of the other's act had astonished him beyond the power of movement for a moment.

He could think of no reason why the other should wish to hinder him delivering the package.

While he stood there, perplexed, every possible motive except the correct one suggesting itself to his alert mind, he noticed a folded paper—like a letter—lying at his feet.

Neil started in surprise.

The letter was addressed to himself.

And the writer was his grandfather, to whom Neil was an utter stranger!

Old David Dare had quarreled with Neil's father because of the latter's marriage, and they had never become reconciled.

The old gentleman resided on a magnificent country estate a hundred miles or so from the great city, and was immensely wealthy.

The boy stared at the letter as if he could not believe the evidence of his own sight:

"MY DEAR NEIL—I inclose a check of two hundred dollars. If you need more let me know; it will all belong to you when I am gone; there is no other way of atoning for my unkindness to your poor father. I am glad you are getting on so well with my old friends; bring the young folks home with you for a visit, by all means."

For a moment the boy was too bewildered for thought.

But a solution of the mystery quickly flashed through his shrewd brain.

Some cunning impostor had assumed his name, and had succeeded in deceiving his credulous old grandfather.

"I think I will write to the old gentleman. I haven't the fondest regard for him, but I don't want him to be imposed upon in that fashion, though," the boy said to himself.

He had no suspicion that a pair of evil eyes were upon him, that they were reading his thoughts and intentions.

In the shadow of that dark strip of sidewalk a man had witnessed the boy's meeting with Oliver Ashton.

As Neil perused the letter in the light of the street lamp the man had crept so close that he, too, could glance over the written sheet.

When Neil walked away from the street-lamp, where he had stopped to read the mysterious letter, he started directly towards home, near the river front.

He had gone half the distance, when suddenly a powerful arm like a clutch of iron was thrown about him and a strong hand pressed a handkerchief, saturated with chloroform, over his nostrils.

When he regained possession of his senses at midnight, it was to find himself bound hand and foot, lying helpless in the bottom of a small, leaky boat, which was perilously adrift in the middle of the river.

At the moment the boat swung easily against some dark object looming through the fog.

The dark object was a loaded barge.

With a wild, despairing shout Neil exerted a superhuman effort and forced himself into an upright attitude in the careening boat.

As he did so one of the barge's crew happened to spy him. In an instant a dozen arms were stretched down to him, and he was drawn aboard the barge.

His cords were removed, a draught of brandy was given him, and he was left in the cabin to exchange his thoroughly drenched clothing for a suit belonging to one of the men.

By the time the change was effected the barge was again under way, bound for a town about a hundred miles up the river.

Neil started when the name of the town was mentioned. It was within a half-hour's travel of the village where his grandfather lived.

A plan instantly suggested itself to the boy.

He would not try to be transferred to some vessel returning to the city.

Instead he would remain on the barge, and while the cargo was unloading he would have plenty of time to visit his grandfather.

After informing the old gentleman of the imposture of which the latter was the victim, he would be allowed perhaps to work his way home again on the barge.

He was still wearing the bargeman's coarse clothing when he left the riverside wharf, and started on his errand.

As he struck into the straight country road, he heard a furious clatter of hoofs behind him.

He looked back to see a light open carriage being whirled along at a furious pace by the frantic bounds of a runaway horse.

The single occupant—a gray-haired, plainly dressed gentleman—was powerless to check the animal, as the reins had been wrenched from his hold and were dangling over the ground.

Not far ahead a bridge was being repaired, and people driving that way were obliged to turn aside and cross a temporary structure some rods down the stream.

The runaway had already bounded past the turning point, and a leap into the unbridged chasm meant death to both horse and driver.

In a second the intrepid boy had grasped the situation, and in a flash he had prepared himself for a heroic deed.

Bracing his muscles for a mighty spring he placed himself directly in the path of the runaway beast.

The next instant he had clutched the bits in both hands, and by the magic of his voice and the strength of his steely young muscles he had forced the animal to a standstill.

"That was a daring act, my young friend. How am I to repay you?" the gentleman said gratefully.

"By saying nothing about it, sir."

"You seem going my way; perhaps you had rather ride than walk."

"Thank you; I should certainly."

"Are you going far?" the gentleman inquired, as Neil took the offered seat beside him.

"Only to David Dare's place; he is my grandfather."

"Indeed!"

The gentleman looked interested and his kindly manner gained the boy's confidence.

And presently, almost before he knew he was doing so, Neil had told him the whole story.

The gentleman smiled, and a moment later he stopped the carriage where the road branched into the village.

"You will see me again, my boy," he said, as Neil stepped

from the carriage and started toward a fine old house a little distance up the opposite branch of the road.

A few steps brought him into a stable yard. It was a spot typical of the country, the ground cleanly sodded and the loft above the low stalls full of sweetly smelling hay.

As Neil surveyed the building he heard a voice which startled him.

It was the voice of the villain who had sent him drugged and bound, adrift in a leaky boat.

Some instinct must have drawn his gaze toward Neil.

"You!—So I didn't finish you after all."

The unguarded exclamation, breaking in superstitious terror from his lips, betrayed him.

"On the contrary, I rather think I shall finish you," the boy said coolly.

As he spoke, he closed the heavy oak door and shot the massive iron bolt into its socket.

The boy could not repress an ejaculation of triumph as he started for the main entrance of the house.

As he closed the stable-yard gate he noticed a lovely girl cantering down the drive.

As she turned to exchange a gay parting salute with a friend on the porch the astonished youth recognized her as the beautiful Evelyn Greer.

As he recognized the charming equestrienne he recalled his strange meeting with Oliver Ashton on the steps of her father's residence, and Oliver's singular behavior at the time.

Like an electric spark the truth flashed upon the boy's brain.

It was Oliver who had dropped the tell-tale letter. It was Oliver who had assumed his name and duped his grandfather, and very likely the prisoner in the stout oak granary had been the instigator of the whole bold scheme.

He had just reached this conclusion, when he heard a clatter of hoofs on the drive and looked up to see the gray-haired gentleman whom he had saved a little while before from such imminent danger, accompanied by an officer of the law.

"Are you waiting for your grandfather, my young friend?" the gray-haired gentleman asked with a twinkling smile.

Neil answered that he had not yet presented himself, and explained why he had not done so.

"Well, you may present yourself now, my boy. I am David Dare, your grandfather; and allow me to add that I am proud of the relationship."

It is needless to say that he did not work his way back to the city on the barge.

The impostor was Oliver Ashton, as Neil had already discovered.

During the time the boys had been associated together in the delivery department of the mammoth fancy goods emporium, Oliver had learned enough of Neil's family history to personate the assumed character successfully.

The villain who had attempted the brave boy's life was the real instigator of the scheme.

He had secured employment on David Dare's estate for some motive of his own, probably to extort funds from the young impostor, and to keep the spurious heir more surely in his power.

Both the elegant Oliver and his accomplice were soon secure behind the bars of the county jail.

At the invitation of Neil's grandfather, the party of young people, whom Oliver had escorted from the city, remained for several days.

The lively Evelyn Greer was delighted with Neil's good fortune, and her admiration for his bravery was unbounded.

She afterward became Neil's wife.

And, of course, Neil eventually inherited old David Dare's immense property.

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